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Building the Bridges to Opportunity: Understanding the Persistence and Departure of African Americans Who Integrated a Southern Urban University

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BUILDING THE BRIDGES TO OPPORTUNITY: UNDERSTANDING THE PERSISTENCE AND DEPARTURE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS WHO INTEGRATED A SOUTHERN URBAN UNIVERSITY

by

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Dedication

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Rev. 21:4 King James Version)

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my maternal grandparents (Willie and Rosie Lee Kemper), my great-great aunt (Rachel Mack), my aunt (Lula Matoes), and my brothers (Ronald Lynn Nicholson and Gregory Earl Cox). Although you have completed your journey and entered through the doors of death, your presence remains.

I also dedicate this dissertation to Mrs. Sammie Burnett Johnson, one of the eight individuals who integrated the institution this dissertation is about. Without courageous trail blazers like her and others, I would not have been given the opportunities I have had.

Acknowledgements

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23: 8-10)

First, I must give thanks and praise to my Lord, Redeemer, and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has never left me alone. Although on the journey to completing this dissertation, there were times when I was spiritually numbed and mentally exhausted. Like Job, I knew he was testing and preparing me for higher ground. I thank God for giving me the strength to climb this mountain and for increasing my faith in him.

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Lastly, but certainly not least, I thank each of the participants of this study. A group of individuals I have come to admire and deeply respect. Their courageous act of integrating a once all-white institution of higher education was an act of bravery that helped blazed the trail for myself and others to follow. Their unselfish desire to make a difference in the lives of others at the expense of being treated unjustly is laudable. I am forever indebted to each of you for taking time out of your schedule to assist me and for being very supportive and encouraging. Words cannot express my profound appreciation and gratitude I have for each of you.

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this grounded theory study was to generate a theory that explained the persistence and attrition of African Americans who integrated a southern, urban university. Using a grounded theory methodology from a constructivist paradigm, the following research questions guided this study: (a) What factors contribute to African Americans staying and graduating from an institution he or she integrated? and (b) What are the reasons participants identify for departure from the institution? Data were collected using in-depth unstructured interviews, document analysis, and the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the participants. Seven individuals participated in this study.

The participants identified four factors that contributed to their graduation and three factors that resulted in their departure. The factors that encouraged the participants to persist and graduate were strong commitment and intent to graduate, self-motivation and determination, the socialization received from the mother, and parental and community support and encouragement. Three factors influenced the participants to depart the institution: unfriendly campus climate, lack of fit with the collegiate environment, and having achieved the goal of integrating the institution.

The emergent grounded theory indicated the participants' decision to attend was based on cost of attendance, parental and community encouragement, and the opportunity to right an injustice. After enrolling in the institution, the decision about whether to stay or depart was based on parental and community involvement, institutional fit and attitude,

and campus climate. These results are both similar and divergent from results of other research studies conducted in higher education on student persistence and attrition.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On September 18, 1959, eight students--with guidance from their parents, teachers, church leaders, and civic leaders--arrived on the campus of Canaan State University (a fictitious name that was used throughout this study to identify this institution). The students would be the first African Americans to enroll at the southern, urban university. These students would come to be known as the "Canaan State Eight."

Because many public schools in America were segregated at this time, the "Canaan State Eight" students would not have been able to attend the institution a few years earlier. However, the legal strategy developed by the NAACP during the late 1930s and several United States Supreme Court cases would alter the landscape of education forever.

The first court case that examined the desegregation of higher education was *Berea College v. Commonwealth of Kentucky* (1908). The Court upheld the state had a right to regulate private institutions and to segregate the institution (Raffel, 1998). In *Missouri ex. rel Gaines v. Canada* (1938), the first case to involve desegregation of public higher education, the Court ruled the state of Missouri had to admit an African American student, Lloyd Gaines, to the University of Missouri law school or establish a new law school in state (Pratt, 2002; Raffel, 1998; Tushnet, 1987). The state of Missouri had offered to pay Gaines' tuition to attend a law school in another state and to pay any excess tuition above what the University of Missouri would have cost. The case was instrumental in helping the NAACP craft a legal strategy that would challenge segregation in graduate and professional schools in public higher education (Patterson,

2001; Pratt, 2002; Preer, 1982; Raffel, 1998; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). According to Patterson (2001) and Pratt (2002), the NAACP thought there would be less resistance from whites to integrating higher education than K-12 education and there were few (one medical school, one law school, no doctorate programs) graduate and professional schools for African Americans to attend in the south which would make it easier to overturn "separate but equal". In *Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents* (1948), using the *Gaines* case as precedent, the Supreme Court ruled Ada Lois Sipuel could not be denied admission to the University of Oklahoma Law School and was entitled to the same legal education as white student applicants (Preer, 1982; Raffel, 1998; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). Also, in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950), the Court ruled after admitting students the institution cannot treat them differently because of their race. This was the first case to consider the intangible factor of the interaction of students with other races as a basis for separate facilities being equal in educational setting (Jackson, 2001; Patterson, 2001; Pratt, 2002; Preer, 1982; Raffel, 1998; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). Another court case, *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), "established the need to examine factors such as the quality of the alumni, faculty reputation, and the experience of the administration in determining if two schools are indeed equal" (Raffel, 1998, p. 249).

The aforementioned cases, although involved colleges and universities, would lay the groundwork for the Court to examine the separate but equal doctrine in K-12 education. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that "separate but equal" was illegal (Jackson, 2001; Raffel, 1998). The seminal court decision legally permitted racial minority students to attend all-white public schools, especially those in southeastern states. The Court affirmed in *Florida ex*

rel. Hawkins v. Board of Control (1956) that the *Brown* case applied to higher education (Raffel, 1998; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). Wraga (2006) argued the *Brown* case helped improve public education by eliminating a dual system of education in America. Verdun (2005) also noted that the case was influential in ending segregation in public transportation, hotel accommodations, and other public spheres. On the other hand, Ladson-Billings (2004) contended the case failed to integrate education in America. She stated, "*Brown* is more accurately characterized as a first step in a long, arduous process to rid the nation of its most pernicious demons-racism and White supremacy" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 10).

Consequently, others also argued in the beginning that the *Brown* case was a failure in many respects. Desegregation was met with stiff resistance prior to and immediately after the ruling in *Brown*, especially in the South. Tushnet (1987) stated the states were successful in delaying and stalling litigation through legal maneuvering prior to the *Brown* case. Collins (1961) noted that in the South, integration was opposed by the majority of residents in those states. When examining the enrollment for Fall 1959 through Spring 1960, Collins (1961) found that African Americans represented less than 1% of the total population of all the public colleges and universities in the South (in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia). It is important to note that three states (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) had not integrated any of their colleges and universities by Fall 1960 and the state of Mississippi was excluded from Collins' study. Unfortunately, Collins (1961) also declared that these same states refused to integrate

their elementary and secondary public schools. Southern states were successful in establishing policies that made the integration of public schools difficult at all levels.

For example, colleges and universities in Mississippi created such requirements as having applicants provide letters from five alumni of the college the student was seeking admission to (Collins, 1961). Saddler (2005) pointed out that "many White communities withdrew support for public schools and established private academies. These schools were primarily targeted at European American parents and were sometimes supported with public funds" (p. 51). Some school districts even closed all their public schools to avoid integration (Saddler, 2005). In addition, many African American K-12 teachers lost their jobs due to desegregation (Haney, 1978; Saddler, 2005). Haney (1978) reported "state legislatures and school boards throughout the South joined in a movement of economic reprisal and intimidation against black educators as a means of forcing them into opposition to integration" (p. 90). Fields-Smith (2005) argued that the *Brown* decision had a negative effect on the African American sense of community, which was based on a village philosophy (pastors, teachers, and other community leaders worked with the parents to help rear the children), and the level of parental involvement in the educational process.

> In segregated communities before the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education*, black parents, teachers, principals, and community leaders were bound by a common enemy and by a set of common expectations. The village was a necessary unit that buffered children from the oppression and discrimination that they endured, thereby supporting their chances for success. Since the implementation of desegregation, on the other hand, African American parents

> have contended with language barriers; segregation within; rather than between, schools; issues of sociocultural incongruence between home and school; and teachers' low expectations for their children. (Fields-Smith, 2005, pp. 132-133)

Problem Statement

Even though *Brown v. Board of Education* is more than 50 years old, desegregation still remains an issue in this nation. Verdun (2005) agreed that higher education continues to struggle to find ways to retain minority students, especially African American students, and to correct the remnants of racism that still plague this nation. Jones and Hancock (2005) stated, "we are in a state [of being] eerily and arguably similar to the pre-Brown era" (p. 97). Across the nation many colleges and universities continue to struggle to create an environment where ethnic minorities feel welcome, invited, and included in the campus culture (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Hunt (2006) and Majesky-Pullman (2007) reported minorities' graduation rates, both high school and college, still lag behind whites. Knapp, Kelly-Reid, and Ginder (2010) reported the national graduation rate for full-time freshmen students who earned their bachelor's degree within six years in 2008 was 57%. However, the national graduation rates for African Americans were 40% and 49% for Hispanics compared to 60% for Caucasians students.

Most of the research on student attrition and persistence has been quantitative. Very little qualitative research has been conducted on factors contributing to African American students dropping out of college. As Barnett (2004) noted, "What has been missing from the literature are the voices of the students themselves--Black students telling their stories and relating their experiences" (p. 55). Numerous books have been

written about students who integrated such institutions as the University of Mississippi, the University of Alabama, and the University of Georgia. But no book has conveyed the experiences of the Canaan State Eight students. Furthermore, no research exists about retention and persistence of students who integrated all-white colleges and universities.

Research Purpose

Without having a historical understanding of the experiences of African American students, it is impossible for institutions of higher learning to adequately address the issues those students encounter. Hunt (2006) argued that we must give voice to those who have been silenced and those who are not adequately served in higher education. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of African Americans who integrated a southern, urban university in 1959 and to explore how their experiences contributed to their graduation or departure from the institution. By exploring the experiences of these individuals, the researcher expected to identify those factors which helped African Americans to endure racism and a hostile environment and graduate from the university. In addition, the researcher intended to pinpoint situations or perceptions that contribute to African Americans departing from the institution. Finally, the researcher used constructivist grounded theory methods to develop a theory that explained what factors contributed to the persistence and attrition of these students. Although other variants of grounded theory exist, a fuller discussion of why this methodology was chosen has been undertaken in Chapter 3.

Potential Significance

Although the participants of this study have long completed their collegiate experiences and all have retired from their professional careers, problems still exist for

African American students attending predominantly white colleges and universities. The findings from this study can be used by higher education policymakers to establish policies and programs that increase the retention and graduation rates for African Americans and other students of color. Furthermore, this study can be used to explain how higher education has historically failed to address issues concerning African Americans. Moreover, higher education will be able to offer and/or establish services and programs which positively contribute to the success of African American students. Finally, this study will help colleges and universities understand the experiences of other ethnicities and minority groups so their retention and graduation rates can be improved.

Research Questions

The research questions that were used to understand the experiences of the participants are: (a) What factors contribute to African Americans staying and graduating from an institution he or she integrated; (b) What are the reasons some participants identify for departure from the institution.

Operationalization of Terms

According to Berger and Lyon (2005) retention refers to an institution's ability to retain a student from admission to graduation. Attrition is the failure of a student to reenroll in an institution in consecutive terms (Berger & Lyon, 2005). The ability of a student to remain and graduate from an institution is persistence (Berger & Lyon, 2005). The term institutional departure is used to describe individuals who left the institution without graduating from the institution (Tinto, 1987, 1993). For the purpose of this study, integration was defined as the process of African Americans becoming the first individuals of color to enroll at an all-white institution. Pike and Kuh (2005) noted

students who have at least one parent to have attended college as second generation college students. Students whose mother or father did not attend college are referred to as first generation college student (Pike & Kuh, 2005). Classic grounded theory refers to the original version of grounded theory developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Cooney, 2010; Holton, 2010).

Assumptions

The researcher assumed several basic suppositions about the participants prior to collecting data. First, the participants would accurately describe their experiences. It is important to note that the events occurred over 50 years ago and the participants could inadvertently leave out or have forgotten some details of their experiences at Canaan State. Secondly, the researcher assumed that the participants are involved in the study to ensure that their story is told and to assist other African American students. Finally, the researcher assumed that the participants will have some similar and contrasting experiences.

Limitations

This study examined the experiences of a group of individuals at one institution of higher learning. Therefore, the findings from this study should not be assumed to capture the experiences of all African Americans who integrated southern, urban colleges and universities. The ability to generalize the findings of this study, like with many qualitative studies, lies with the ability of a researcher to assess the degree that the characteristics, findings, and conclusions may be similar to their own study. Given the number of years since the students have left the institution, there are similarities and differences between current college students and the participants.

Overview of Chapters

In chapter 2, I reviewed the literature relevant to student persistence and attrition. Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology and the approach to data analysis. The fourth chapter provides an emergent grounded theory. The final chapter discussed the limitations of the study, compared and contrasted the emergent theory with existing theories, and offered recommendations for policies and suggestions for future research in higher education as it relates to the retention of African American students.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Charmaz (2006) noted earlier versions of ground theory discouraged conducting a literature review until after data had been collected and analysis had begun. However, she insisted "completing a thorough, sharply focused literature review strengthens your argument--and your credibility…The trick is to use it without letting it stifle your creativity or strangle your theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 166). Other researchers (Walls, Parahoo, & Fleming, 2010) also argued a review of the literature in a grounded theory study is important to assist the researcher in understanding the participants' experience and analyzing data, but cautioned the researcher to remain open-minded about the data being collected and analyzed. This study used the theory of student departure, the quality of effort theory, and theory of involvement as the theoretical frameworks to assist the researcher in understanding the participants' experiences and conducting data analysis. Although each theory was developed after the integration of Canaan State University, Reason (2009) and Tinto (2006) acknowledged the similarities between the three theories and their ability to understand student integration into the collegiate environment. In addition, the theories are used as the primary foundation for many of the services offered at higher education institutions across the nation to establish policies and programs that assist in retaining students. "Given the insidious and often subtle way in which race and racism operate, it is imperative that educational researchers explore the role of race when examining the educational experiences of African-American students" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 26). They suggested critical race theory would be an optimal theory to use when conducting educational research about African American students. Therefore,

the critical race theory was also used by the researcher to assist with data analysis and to understand the experiences of the participants.

Theory of Student Departure

Tinto developed the theory of student departure using the work of Van Gennep (rites of passage) and Durkheim (theory of suicide). His theory attempts to examine student departure from a longitudinal perspective. In addition, it describes how the interaction of students and the college environment lead to student persistence or departure. Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) argued that much of the research on retention is flawed. One of the examples he cited was that there is often confusion between institutional departure and system departure. Institutional departure is defined as a student leaving a specific institution. Whereas system departure occurs when a student leaves higher education and chooses not to return to any postsecondary institution. In other words, institutional departure is temporary and system departure is permanent. Failure to adequately define these terms, has resulted in studies which contradict each other, over estimate college dropout rates, and lead to the development of policies in higher education which adversely affects students and institutions of higher learning (Tinto 1975, 1987, 1993). Moreover, Tinto (1987, 1993) insisted that retention should not be the ultimate goal of higher education. Rather, he proposed higher education and students would benefit more if the goal of higher education was to develop students socially and intellectually.

Causes of Student Departure. Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) enumerated several causes of student departures. Tinto (1987, 1993) distinguished between causes that were based on individual attributes and those characteristic related to the institutional

environment and/or culture. An individual's departure from an institution is based on a student's intentions and level of commitment. An individual's educational and/or occupational goals influence one's intention. Tinto (1987, 1993) argued that an individual aspiring to be a doctor would be more inclined to persist and graduate because of the education requirements needed to pursue such a career. On the other hand, he contended someone entering college because of employment requirements such as to enhance existing skills probably never had any intentions of graduating from the institution. Those individuals only intended to gain a particular set of skills and would depart the institution once their goals were achieved. Also, Tinto (1987, 1993) noted some individuals enroll in an institution with the intentions of transferring to another institution of higher learning. This phenomenon is usually associated with those attending community colleges or those who could not gain admission into their college of choice because of academic reasons. In addition, Tinto (1987, 1993) pointed out many students enter college uncertain about their educational and career goals or change their goals after attending college. Failure to formulate a plan within a reasonable amount of time, Tinto (1987, 1993) contended typically leads to departure.

Another individual attribute that influences departure is commitment. Tinto (1987, 1993) indicated that an individual's commitment is based on effort and motivation. He identified two forms of commitment: goal commitment and institutional commitment. Goal commitment is the willingness of the student to achieve his/her educational and/or occupational goals. According to Tinto (1987), "high goal commitment may lead to transfer whereas low commitment may result in permanent withdrawal from all forms of higher education" (p. 47). Institutional commitment is the

level of dedication one makes towards achieving goals within the specific institution he/she attends. An individual's institutional commitment may arise from family ties and/or the prestige associated with the institution's name and reputation. The more committed an individual is to an institution the more likely he/she will persist and graduate.

At the institutional level, Tinto (1987, 1993) identified four factors which influence a student to depart from a college/university: adjustment, academic difficulty, incongruence, and isolation. Academic and social adjustments are required for students to persist and graduate. Such adjustments can be extremely difficult for individuals who cannot adjust to being away from their high school friends or from their family. Students who may have had previous experiences such as attending summer camps or traveling may have developed some coping skills that help them adjust to college. However, the student's personality can be more powerful in determining whether or not he or she adjusts to the social and academic demands and persists. For example, students who are "more mature, emotionally stable, more flexible, and adaptive to new circumstances" are better equipped to manage stress and deal with demands of college (Tinto, 1987, p. 50). Academic difficulty can result in a student departing from an institution. When students are unable or unwilling to meet the academic requirements of the institution, they depart because the institution dismissed them or to avoid being dismissed from the institution. It should be noted that Tinto (1987, 1993) found that most of the departures from colleges and universities were voluntary withdrawals, not academic dismissals. "Less than 25 percent of all institutional departures, nationally, take the form of academic dismissal. Most departures are voluntary in the sense that they occur without any formal compulsion

on the part of institution" (Tinto, 1993, p. 49). Incongruency also causes students to depart from an institution of higher learning. Tinto (1987, 1993) defined incongruence as poor fit between the interests and needs of the individual and the institution. The lack of congruence leads the individual to decide to transfer to another institution where a better fit is perceived or to leave college altogether. Unlike incongruence, isolationism occurs when a student fails to make an academic and/or social connection to the college or university.

Stages of Passages in Student Persistence. Using the work of Van Gennep, Tinto (1987, 1988, 1993) identified three stages of passages (separation, transition, and incorporation) students undergo to become members of the college/university community. Separation is defined as disengaging oneself from one's past communities and patterns. Tinto (1987, 1988, 1993) insisted students must make changes to their patterns of behavior and separate from high school friends and family members to become part of the college community and persist. Transition occurs during the period in which the student struggles with managing past associations and behavior with new norms. "The problems associated with separation and transition to college are conditions that, though stressful, need not in themselves lead to departure. It is the individual's response to those conditions that finally determines staying or leaving" (Tinto, 1993, p. 98). Incorporation occurs when a student has adopted new patterns of behavior and new associations within the campus community. Tinto (1988) stated the stages of departure vary for each student. He noted that some students may experience the stages in the same order and other students may experience multiple stages at the same time. However, he maintained that students who make the necessary adjustments become integrated into the

institution's community.

Academic and Social Integration. Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) model of student departure includes two major components: academic integration and social integration. The model emphasized that a student's ability to persist and graduate from college is greatly influenced by his/her level of integration (social and academic) into the institution.

> The model does not argue that full integration in both systems of the college is necessary for persistence. Nor does it claim that failure to be integrated in either system necessarily leads to departure. Rather it argues that some degree of social and intellectual integration and therefore membership in academic and social communities must exist as a condition for continued persistence. (Tinto, 1993, p. 120)

Tinto's model was validated by other researchers (Munro, 1981; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983) who found that an individual's ability to become academically or socially integrated into the institution increased a student's likelihood of graduating. Their study argued a student's commitment to graduation is greatly influenced by their level of social and academic integration. Hausmann, Schofield, and Woods (2007) maintained that students who were more academically integrated into the institution had a greater sense of belonging and higher intention to persist. Allen, Robbins, Casillas, and Oh (2008) insisted "pre-college academic preparation is essential to first-year academic performance, which then affects likelihood of staying, transfer, or dropout" (p. 662). On the other hand, Chen and Desjardins (2008) revealed neither high school GPA or SAT score significantly influenced student persistence, but academic

integration significantly decreased student attrition. In some studies (Bean, 1985; Berger & Milem, 1999) social integration had a greater impact than academic integration on persistence. Bean (1985) found peer support has a positive significant effect on students' perception of institutional fit and commitment to persistence. In a study conducted by Christie and Dinham (1991), freshmen Caucasians students having friends on-campus who attended the same high school or friends from high school who attended another college/university had a positive effect on social integration.

Mixed results were reported by Fischer (2007), whose study indicated having more relationships on-campus had a significant positive effect on college grades for minority students (African American, Asians, and Hispanics) but not for white students. In addition, she further posited having more friends on campus resulted in higher rates of persistence and off-campus relationships had a negative impact on student's integration into campus life. Museus (2008) posited that for students of color it may be necessary to examine the extent students interact with others who have similar cultural backgrounds along with the type and frequency of social interactions.

Some researchers (Allen et al., 2008; Braxton, Vesper, & Hossler, 1995; Pascellella & Chapman, 1983) indicated both academic and social integration had a significant impact on persistence. However, Pascellella and Chapman (1983) reported academic integration had a greater impact on persistence at four-year residential institution. In contrast, social integration had a greater influence on persistence for students attending two-year institutions and four-year commuter institutions. Pascarella and Terenzini (1979) noted a compensatory relationship between academic and social integration. Thus, a student who is less integrated socially may be more academically

integrated which can lead to persistence. On the other hand, greater social integration may compensate for poor academic integration and have a positive influence on persistence.

Socioeconomic Status. Tinto (1975) noted a student's family socioeconomic status has an impact on persistence in college. Specifically, he insisted students from lower socioeconomic status families are less likely to persist than students from higher socioeconomic status families. He further reported that students of lower socioeconomic status drop out mainly because of academic dismissals whereas students of higher socioeconomic status tend to drop out voluntarily. Several studies (Pascerella, Pierson, Wolniak, &Terenzini, 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996; Walpole, 2003, 2008) have found consistent characteristics associated with low socioeconomic status and first generation students. These types of students complete fewer course hours, work more hours per week, less involved in extracurricular activities, take longer time to complete a degree, have lower degree aspirations, study less, and interact with their peers less than second generation college students.

Somers, Woodhouse, and Cofer (2004) found first generation students with degree aspirations were twice as likely to persist as other students pursuing an advanced degree. Other researchers (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Strayhorn, 2006) also concluded higher degree aspirations resulted in higher GPAs among first generation students. Terenzini et al. (1996) found first generation students who were certain of their college major had a positive effect on cognitive development and learning. Another study (Pascarella et al., 2004) found involvement in academic-related activities had greater positive effects for first generation than continuing generation students. Fox (1986) also

indicated academic integration had a positive direct effect on persistence for students of low socioeconomic status. As Fox (1986) noted "perhaps this is a reflection of a compensatory relationship in that those who concentrate on academics during the freshmen year and who are more likely to remain in school, do so at the expense of social contacts" (p. 421). In contrast, Kim and Sax (2009) found first generation students communicated less with faculty outside of class and during lectures in class. Also, as one's socioeconomic status increases so does the level of communication and interaction with faculty. Pascarella et al. (2004) indicated first generation students benefited also from co-curricular involvement with their peers. Moreover, Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) noted even continuing generation students who participated in student organizations increased their chances of persisting. Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller (2007) indicated multiethnic and first generation students who were not involved in student organizations had a negative effect on learning. Pike and Kuh (2005) noted the difference in involvement and engagement may be attributed to the fact that first-generation students "have less tacit knowledge of and fewer experiences with college campuses and related activities, behaviors, and role models" than second-generation college students (p. 290). Furthermore, researchers (Somers et al., 2004) found first generation students who attended college full-time and lived on campus were more likely to persist than students who attended part-time or lived off campus. Pike and Kuh (2005) also identified living off campus as a negative effect on first generation students' level of engagement in campus activities and intellectual development. Strayhorn (2006) indicated African American males who were first generation college students had lower cumulative GPA than white males and female students in general. Lohfink and Paulsen

(2005) found first generation students who attended public institutions were more likely to persist than those attending private institutions.

Institution Type. Tinto (1975) reported private and four-year institutions have lower attrition rates than public and two-year colleges and universities. Recent research (Melguizo, 2008) has concluded that for African American and Hispanics students, the more selective an institution's admission standards, the higher the graduation rate. Allen (1992) found African American students had higher academic achievement and greater levels of social involvement at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) than predominantly white institutions. Several studies (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Thompson & Fretz, 1991) noted the difference in HBCUs and predominantly white institutions appeared to result from the support African American students perceive from faculty and peers. According to Outcalt and Skewes-Cox (2002), "HBCUs succeed in educating their African American students largely because they provide a climate in which African American students feel welcome, supported, and encouraged to take part in the social and academic life of the campus" (p. 345). Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) posited African American students at HBCUs are able to gain energy and confidence from the support they receive from peers and faculty. On the other hand, African American students at predominantly white institutions expend energy explaining their culture to others and addressing stereotypes. Thus, African American students at HBCUs perceived peers and the faculty to be more concerned with their well-being than students attending predominantly white institutions. Therefore, "the energy that is cultivated or diverted in students can propel them toward academic pursuits or impede their progress" (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002, p. 326). Watson and Kuh (1996)

concluded African American students who attended HBCUs and white students from predominantly white institutions made similar gains in personal growth and development from participating in co-curricular activities and academic-related activities. Consequently, African American students attending predominantly white institution failed to have the same gains as their white peers and blacks at HBCUs. In another study (Kim, 2002), no significant difference was found between African Americans attending HBCUs and predominantly white institutions in academic, writing, and math ability.

Campus Climate.

> Inherent in the model of institutional departure is the important notion that colleges are systematic enterprises comprised of a variety of linking interactive, reciprocal parts, formal and informal, academic and social. Events in one segment of the college necessarily and unavoidably influence events in other parts of the institution. (Tinto, 1993, p. 118)

Tinto (1993) suggested for students of color attending predominantly white institutions, challenges associated with racial discrimination may exist which results in a feeling of isolation and marginalization that can lead to departure. He further argued the perception of being incongruent with members of the dominant culture in the collegiate environment can lead to withdrawal from the institution. For Eimers (2001), the perception of campus climate of students in all racial groups had a significant impact on math and science development, intellectual and skill development, career development, and problem-solving development, which all impact college student persistence. Prior research (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983; Stage, 1989) also indicated the institution's culture and environment has the greatest influence on persistence. Brown and Wright (1999) revealed

African American students' perception of the collegiate environment significantly influenced their persistence rates and level of involvement in campus activities. Some researchers (Eimers, 2001; Rankin & Reason, 2005) concluded students of color had a more negative perception of the campus climate than Caucasian students. Fischer (2007) indicated minority students who perceived a negative racial climate were less satisfied with their college experience and more likely to depart from the institution. Cureton (2003) further posited "if Black students perceive the university to be racist, then those feelings can cause them to either transfer, drop out, or continue their education with a chip on their shoulders (prohibiting academic growth)" (p. 307). Reynolds, Sneva, and Beehler (2010) noted stress from racism had a negative impact on the academic engagement of students of color. In another study, Cureton (2003) did not find any significant differences between African American and Caucasian students' perception of the campus racial climate at a predominantly white institution.

External Community-Family. Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) argued that it was necessary for students to disassociate from family and friends to integrate into the campus community. He viewed family as part of students' external community and argued obligations to one's family can be deleterious if it diverts students from commitment to the institution. On the other hand, he later acknowledged,

> Where it was once argued that retention required students to break away from past communities we now know that for some, if not many students, the ability to remain connected to their past communities, family, church, or tribe is essential to their persistence. (Tinto, 2006, p. 4)

Several studies (Barnett, 2004; Crosnoe, Mistry, & Elder, 2002; Herndon & Hirt, (2004); London, 1989; McCarran & Inkelas, 2006; Perna & Titus, 2005) have shown that parental involvement plays a vital role in students' decisions about whether or not to attend college. Melendez and Melendez (2010) found students who perceived their parents as supportive and understanding adjusted better academically, socially, and psychologically to college. Hausmann et al. (2007) research indicated African American students at predominantly white institutions who had parental and peer support resulted in a sense of belonging to the institution which increased their intention to persist to a second year at the institution. Prior researchers (Barnett, 2004; Herndon & Hirt, 2004) have found that African American students identified parental support and involvement as the primary reason for persistence to graduation. Walker and Satterwhite (2002) research indicated both African American and Caucasian students who received parental support were less likely to withdraw from the institution. However, parental involvement with African American students may not include support with academic-related issues. Specifically for minority students, Melendez and Melendez (2010) stated, "support may be serving as a buffer against discrimination or isolation, thereby facilitating the students' commitment and attachment to their college" (p. 431). In contrast, Mallinckrodt (1988) contended for African American students, individuals from the campus community had greater influence than parents on college persistence. Some researchers (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005) have noted that African American students perceived their peers as better equipped to address academic problems than their parents. Whereas, students from more affluent backgrounds have greater engagement with their parents and perceive their parents as better equipped to navigate the collegiate environment (Wolf, Sax, & Harper,

2009). This study also revealed that as students progressed through college, parental involvement declined but female students had greater contact with their parents than male students. In addition, Wolf et al. (2009) noted students whose parents were immigrants had greater contact with their parents overall, but lower than average contact about academic matters. Although parental involvement differs across ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and gender, "these findings call into question previous notions of autonomy and independence that were considered imperative aspects of college student persistence and retention in earlier theories" (Melendez & Melendez, 2010, p. 432).

External Community-Student Employment. Tinto (1987, 1993) argued that student employment, depending on the number of hours worked and the extent the job removes the student from the campus community, can be detrimental to college persistence rates. Several studies (Astin, 1993; Furr & Elling, 2000; Lundberg, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini , 2005; Pike, Kuh, & Massa-McKinley, 2008) have shown working part-time on-campus has a positive effect on completing a bachelor's degree, being involved with co-curricular activities, and/or interacting with faculty and staff outside of class. However, working 20 or more hours per week had a negative effect on graduating with a bachelor's degree, participating in student organizations, and interacting with faculty and staff (Astin, 1993, Furr & Elling, 2000; Furr & Elling, 2002; Pike et al., 2008). Svanum and Bigatti (2006) also found students who worked many hours have lower grade point averages. Other studies have contradicted that working in excess of 20 hours per week have deleterious effects on students' persistence and learning. Lundberg (2004) found that working more than 20 hours off-campus did not affect learning. Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedon, and Terenzini (1998) revealed

working on or off campus did not affect cognitive development during the first or second year of college. Consequently, during the third year of college " part-time on- or off-campus work had a positive influence, but on-campus work in excess of 15 hours per week or off-campus work in excess of 20 hours per week had a negative impact" on cognitive development (Pascarella et al., 1998, p. 75). Research on student employment remains inconclusive as to the extent that working goes from being a positive influence to a counterproductive one.

Financial Aid. Tinto (1987, 1993) noted a student's personal finances impact the decision to attend college and which institution to attend. Once students enroll, finances are more of an issue in the early stages of a students' college career and mainly affects students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Otherwise, he maintained that to manage financial crises which arise with students or their families, an individual may temporarily withdraw, change institutions, or attend part time. He contended financial aid awarded to students has a direct, positive influence on students' persistence. He further argued that the kind of student financial aid awarded is important in enhancing persistence. "Generally, the growing consensus among researchers is that grants and work-study are more effective in promoting persistence than are loans and other forms of aid" (Tinto, 1993, p. 68). Hu (2010) also found that scholarships have a positive influence on student persistence for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, findings revealed scholarships affected the type of college a student chose to attend and "indirectly promote[d] student engagement in college activities, academically and socially" (Hu, 2010, p.157). In another study, Gross, Hossler, and Siskin (2007) found institutional aid had a positive effect on student persistence, especially for male students.

St. John, Paulsen, and Carter (2005) reported receiving grants and having low cost tuition had a positive influence on persistence for African American students. Other studies have indicated first generation college students are debt averse and try to avoid student loans (Somers et al., 2004); student loans also have a negative effect on student persistence (Dowd & Coury, 2006). Consequently, Chen and Desjardins (2008) posited the receipt of student loans did not affect student persistence for upper, middle, or low-income students. Gansemer-Topf and Schuh (2005) pointed out that the amount of student financial aid expenditures (the amount of dollars an institution dedicates to financial aid) positively influences retention and graduation rates at schools with low admission selectivity. However, the amount of student financial aid expenditures did not affect retention and graduation rates at institutions with high admission selectivity.

Criticism of Tinto's Model. Reason (2003) indicated that Tinto's model has become outdated. The changing demographics of college require the model be altered. As an increasing number of students from formerly underrepresented groups come to campus, the effects of race, gender, ethnicity, age, and other demographic variables will change. "New studies must reexamine our understanding of these variables and their relationships to retention" (Reason, 2003, p. 187). In particular, Reason (2003) insisted that the increasing diversity of the nation's institutions of higher learning and the commitment to increase retention nationwide demands a reevaluation of the model.

Some researchers have argued that Tinto's research findings are not applicable to African Americans and other minorities. Tierney (1999) asserted Tinto's model insists "college initiates must undergo a form of cultural suicide, whereby they make a clean break from the communities and cultures in which they were raised and integrate and

assimilate into the dominant culture of the colleges they attend" (p. 82). Tierney (1992) posited that students must commit cultural suicide to avoid intellectual suicide. Furthermore, Tierney (1999) maintained that such a theoretical assumption is flawed and ignore the historical oppression that many minority groups endured. Lee (1999) also emphasized the importance of recognizing that African Americans' experiences differ geographically which influence how racism and discrimination affect their perception. Such perceptions can make it easier or extremely difficult to assimilate into an unfamiliar culture. Berger and Milem (1999) research indicated a student having similar norms, values, and behavior, especially as it relates to ethnicity and political views, as the institution are more likely to persist. Thus, Berger and Milem (1999) argued "students who successfully integrate into the academic and social subsystems of a college do so not at the expense of their home backgrounds, but because of them" (p. 661). Museus and Quaye (2009) found similar results in their study. They maintained students of color who had lived in predominantly white environments were more successful in navigating the collegiate environments at predominantly white institutions than students of color who lived in predominantly minority environments. In addition, Tierney (1999) proclaimed that Tinto failed to take into consideration that many of higher education's policies and models are based on Eurocentric, not African American, concepts which differ dramatically. Higher education, Tierney (1999) adamantly pronounced, should "not view the academic world as a place into which students need to fit and assimilate or face intellectual suicide" (p. 83).

Guiffrida (2003) also disagreed with Tinto's notion that students need to assimilate to be successful in college. He emphasized the need for African American

students to be involved in African American student organizations to be become socially integrated into the institution. Guiffrida (2003) insisted that the students' affiliation with African American organizations enabled the students to establish relationships with African American faculty, help other African American students at the institution, and to interact with other African American students. On the other hand, Guiffrida (2003) agreed with Tinto's model that social integration impacts student retention and satisfaction.

Guiffrida (2006) recommended that Tinto needed to revise his theory to be more culturally sensitive to minority students. In particular, Guiffrida (2004, 2006) insisted Tinto's model should recognize the support of minority students' friends and family provide not just the pre-collegiate support from the family. Also, Guiffrida (2006) stressed that Tinto should use the word "connection" instead of integration. According to Guiffrida,

> connection recognizes students' subjective sense of relatedness without implying the need to break ties with one's former community. This subtle yet important change allows the theory to recognize that students can become comfortable in the college environment without abandoning supportive relationships at home or rejecting the values and norms of their home communities. (p. 457)

It is through cultural connections, Guiffrida (2006) argued, that minority students are able to cope with racism and other discrimination that allows them to persist and graduate from the institution. Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Hagedorn (1999) also endorsed the concept that for African American students, family support and cultural connections greatly increased a student's commitment to the institution and graduation

from the institution. Guiffrida (2006) contended that the aforementioned change to Tinto's theory would provide a more extensive understanding of students' ability to commit to, persist in, and graduate from college.

Tinto's theory was useful in understanding the experiences of the Canaan State Eight students for many reasons. The theory was used as a basis to compare and contrast the findings of this study. In the past, other researchers have attempted to validate this theory using minority students. It should be noted that Tinto's original theory was developed at a predominantly white institution using mainly Caucasian students who lived on campus (Tierney, 1992). Finally, the theory help supported the theory the researcher generated.

Quality of Effort

C. Robert Pace developed the quality of effort model using research conducted in 1979. The purpose of the model was to study "students' learning and development and how the student and the institution interact in contributing to educational effectiveness" (Pace, 1979, p. 125). In essence, Pace's model assessed how the experiences and activities a student encountered in college affected his or her growth and development. Pace (1979) used the term "college impress" to explain the effect college has on students and how their satisfaction with their experiences and activities contribute to their personal and social development. Pace (1982) argued that his quality of effort scales were naturally voluntary, which is similar to the decision to attend college. Therefore, it is logical that individuals who have a strong desire to attend college and graduate with a degree would devote the necessary effort and resources needed to be successful in their endeavors.

Background Characteristics. Pace (1979) insisted that students enter college with different skills, abilities, and personal characteristics. These pre-college characteristics assist in determining student success. Kuh (2007) also agreed that "socioeconomic background, financial means, college readiness, and support from home substantially influence whether a person will earn a credential or degree" (p. B12). In a study conducted by Hu and Kuh (2002), similar results were found. They pointed out those students who were academically prepared prior to entering college dedicated more time and effort to their studies in college than students who were under prepared academically. In addition, their study revealed the higher the parental educational attainment the higher the student's level of engagement. LaNasa, Olson, and Alleman (2007) noted students who exerted more effort were more satisfied with their overall collegiate experience, regardless of past academic abilities and academic year (freshmen through senior year). However, Pace (1982) acknowledged that one could better predict the outcome of student success when using the quality of effort scales along with students' background characteristics. Kuh (1993) cautioned that it is important to account for "students' pre-college predilections to changes compatible with those valued by the institution's mission and philosophy" when considering how one's background characteristics influence student outcomes (p. 297). Pace (1982) and Tinto (1975,1987, 1993) emphasized that students' prior experiences and skills matter, but the most significant factor that determine student persistence and success is what he/she does when he/she arrives at the institution.

Use of Campus Resources. Pace's (1979) model indicated that students attend numerous activities and have immeasurable experiences at various locations on campus

(classroom, library, residence halls, athletic facilities, etc.). From their experiences with other students and faculty at these facilities, students grow personally and socially and improve their learning. Pace's model was validated in a longitudinal study conducted over three years with 12,000 students (Pace, 1982). The study found, regardless of prior achievement and family background characteristics, that the quality of effort devoted to the use of campus resources and facilities determined student success. In another study, Mallinckrodt and Sedlacek (2009) emphasized the importance of certain campus facilities in increasing retention. Their findings indicated students who used the library, ate on campus in a dining facility, and attended activities such as concerts in the college union were more likely to persist in college. In addition, the use of the campus recreational facility and the college union positively impacted retention for African American students. Kuh and Hu (2001) study argued faculty-student interaction encouraged students to devote greater effort to other academic activities because students who have significant faculty interaction are more satisfied with their collegiate experiences and have greater learning and development. As Pace (1979) clearly pointed out, "all learning and development requires an investment of time and effort by the student. What students can gain from the variety of events depends on the amount, scope, and quality of their engagement" (p.127). In other words, Pace (1979) declared that the frequency and consistency of time and effort students invest in the use of resources and facilities that the institution offers determine their academic success.

Campus Environment. Pace's (1979) model insisted that the environment of the campus (its facilities, expectations of students and others, reward system, and policies) contributes to the overall development of the student when clearly defined and produces a

climate that encourages students to exert effort and be successful. In addition, Pace's (1982) study revealed that student satisfaction is positively correlated with gains in intellectual development and welcoming and supportive environments. In other words, students who participate in programs and services that help them succeed academically and socially are more likely to be successful than students who do not participate in those services. Tinto (1997) claimed that "students put more effort into that form of educational activity that enables them to bridge the academic-social divide so that they are able to make friends and learn at the same time" (p. 615). Also, other studies (Kuh, 1995; LaNasa et al., 2007; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) found students had higher personal and social development when they had to exert more effort academically and where participation was encouraged by the campus community. Kuh, Arnold, and Vesper (1991) concurred: "when faculty members opt for multiple choice exams and assign relatively few papers, they demand less effort from their students; hence students learn less" (pp. 26-27). Kuh and Hu (2001) further noted students' out-of-class experiences influence their perception of campus and impact the amount of effort exerted and level of satisfaction.

Tinto (1987, 1993) acknowledged using the quality of effort to develop his theory. It also has been instrumental in developing other theories in higher education. Therefore, this theory was used to help the researcher fill in gaps while conducting data analysis. The quality of effort theory was also used to compare and contrast the theory the researcher generated.

Theory of Involvement

Astin's (1984) theory of involvement is based on a study conducted on students who dropped out of college. His study found that students who persisted were involved and students who dropped out exhibited characteristics of not being involved. According to Astin (1984), student involvement is defined as "the quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in college experience. Such involvement takes many forms, such as absorption in academic work, participation in extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and other institutional personnel" (p. 307). The theory of involvement is based on five basic principles: (a) involvement is based on the amount of energy spent on a task or with an organization; (b) the individual's level of involvement changes depending on the task or organization and varies at time; (c) involvement can be measured with both numbers and words; (d) the amount of time and effort devoted to a task or organization directly affects the level of development and learning; and (e) policies and practices that increase student involvement are considered to be effective (Astin, 1984). The theory emphasized that certain aspects (living on campus, student-faculty interaction, and participation in student government) of campus involvement had a greater impact on students than the individual background and/or experiences entering college or the type of institution.

Living on Campus. Astin (1984) found "living on campus substantially increases the student's chances of persisting and of aspiring to a graduate or professional degree" (p. 304). Astin's findings have been refuted by some studies and supported by other studies. Thompson, Samiratedu, and Rafter (1993) pointed out that regardless of race or gender, students living on campus had higher retention rates than students living off

campus. Astin (1993) found living on campus in a residence hall had a positive direct effect on students being satisfied with their relationship with faculty members, willing to return to the same institution, and graduating. LaNasa et al. (2007) found students living on campus were more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities and to be exposed to campus programs and services which enabled a student to be successful, regardless of past academic performance. On the other hand, Astin (1993) revealed that living on campus in a private room had a negative effect on retention. Christie and Dinham (1991) pointed out living on campus helped students integrate socially by "meeting other students, developing student friendships, gaining information about social opportunities on campus, and shifting away from high-school friends" (p.419). A study conducted by Pascarella (1985), using information from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) with a sample of nearly 4,200 students from 74 institutions of higher learning, indicated that living on campus did not have a direct effect on persistence or withdrawal after being enrolled in college for two years. He disclosed that his study is not applicable to minority students since all participants in his study were Caucasian. However, using data collected from the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) between 1990 and 2000 with a sample of nearly 6,100 African American students from 212 colleges and universities, Flowers (2004) revealed African Americans living on campus had higher personal and social developments than those living off campus. Therefore, their rates of retention were higher. Blimling (1989) vehemently argued that the data on the benefits of living on campus versus off campus is inconclusive because some of the researchers did not design their studies to control for past academic

performance, which can erroneously influence the results. It should be noted that Flowers (2004) followed Blimling's (1989) recommendations when designing his study.

Student-Faculty Interaction. Moreover, Astin (1984) indicated "frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed any other student or institutional characteristic" (p. 304). His findings were supported by Lundberg (2003), who argued that it is essential for students to have connections with faculty, students, and administrators to be successful in college. Tinto (1997) noted that the "the classroom is the crossroads where the social and the academic meet" (p. 599). Therefore, if there is no involvement in the classroom, it would be extremely difficult for students to be involved academically or socially (Tinto, 1997). Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) indicated that the quality and frequency of both formal and informal interaction between student and faculty had a positive and significant impact on persistence. Lundberg and Schreiner (2004) reported in their study "frequent student interaction with faculty made a strong contribution to student learning for all racial groups" (p. 559). More specifically, they found minority students benefited more than white students from faculty interaction. Cole (2008) also found out African American and Hispanic students' educational satisfaction with college hinged more on their contact with faculty than with their peers. In another study (Kim & Sax, 2009), researchers found African American students interacted more with faculty on course-related issues than other ethnic groups. However, unlike other ethnic groups (Asian, Latino, and White), course-related faculty interaction for African American students did not lead to better college grades or advanced degree aspirations. In addition, there was not an increase in satisfaction with the collegiate experience for those African American

students. Other studies have indicated that informal interaction can be just as effective as formal interaction in positively impacting persistence and retention (Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Tinto, 1987, 1993; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). For interaction to occur between student and faculty, Komarraju, Musulkin, and Bhattacharya (2010) noted faculty must be respectful to students, approachable, and encouraging. Pascarella, Seifert, and Whitt (2008) also concluded faculty members who have classroom instruction that is organized and clear increased the likelihood of first-year students returning to college for a second year.

Studies show the level of student-faculty interaction is based on institutional type and students' level of classification. Kuh and Hu (2001) reported students at liberal arts institutions had more contact with faculty than students at research institutions. Seifert, Drummond, and Pascarella (2006) indicated African American students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) non-classroom interactions with faculty were significantly greater than those who attended research universities. However, the in-classroom interactions with faculty were similar for African Americans attending predominantly white research and liberal arts institutions. Some studies (Kuh &Hu, 2001; Tinto, 1997; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) have concluded that upper class students have more interactions with faculty than younger students. This phenomenon probably exists because "faculty themselves likely make themselves more accessible to juniors and seniors, as they are more comfortable with and find it more rewarding to work on an individual basis with more intellectually mature students in the context of their discipline" (Kuh & Hu, 2001, p. 326).

Participation in Student Government and Student Activities. Astin (1984) argued that participating in student government had a positive impact on students' growth and development. Blocher (1978) suggested "perhaps the greatest shortcoming of most American campuses is in their inability to provide for intrinsic rewards through immediate evidence of the value of learning" (p. 24). Therefore, involvement in student government and activities is important because it provides students an opportunity to apply their learning. Foubert and Grainger (2006) found students who were involved in student organizations and clubs had greater psychosocial development than students who were uninvolved. In addition, their findings concluded students who are involved in co-curricular activities early in their collegiate career may benefit more from involvement. "Student engagement in educationally purposeful activities during the first year of college had a positive, statistically significant effect on persistence" (Kuh et al., 2008, p. 551). In addition, African American students benefited more than whites from being involved in educationally purposeful activities. Tinto (1987, 1993) pointed out that if a student cannot find an organization that is compatible with their interests, this could lead to withdrawal from the institution of higher education. Berger and Milem (1999) noted students who were uninvolved early in their collegiate career remained so and were less likely to persist and graduate. Also, it is sometimes difficult to get students involved because of their commitments (family, work, civic, etc.) outside of the institutions, especially at non-residential and metropolitan campuses (Kuh et al., 2001).

Other studies found that students get involved in campus activities for cultural reasons. Guiffrida (2003) indicated that African American students' participation in student activities at predominantly white institutions "assisted them in establishing out-

of-class connections with faculty, provided them opportunities to give back to other Blacks, and allowed them to feel comfortable by being around others perceived as like them" (p. 307). Sutton and Kimbrough (2001) found African American students attending predominantly white institutions were primarily involved in minority student organizations because such organizations provided an outlet for camaraderie with their peers that other campus-wide organizations did not. In another study, Museus (2008) indicated by participating in ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions African American and Asian students became social integrated into the campus community and established relationships with members of their own culture. Museus and Quaye (2009) also posited involvement in ethnic student organizations serve as a source of cultural validation for students and has a positive effect on persistence. Watson and Kuh (1996) revealed African American students benefited the least from their campus involvement, although they were more involved on-campus. Chavous (2000) claimed African American students who had come from interracial neighborhoods participated in fewer African American student organizations than those from homogenous neighborhoods. Milem, Umbach, and Liang (2004) found the discussion of diversity inside the classroom facilitated greater participation in diversity of activities outside the classroom. Ironically, some researchers (Chang, 1999; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Kuh, 1993) found student satisfaction with their collegiate experience is enhanced in diverse learning environments. Hu and Kuh (2002) revealed that Caucasians and men were less likely to be engaged on campus than African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, and women.

As with the previous aforementioned theories, the theory of involvement was to assist the researcher in generating a grounded theory. First, the theory was useful to help generate questions to ask the participants. Also, the theory of involvement was used to confirm the findings of the generated theory. In addition, the theory provided support and an explanation for divergent occurrences during data analysis.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory was developed in the 1970s by legal scholars as a response to society's inability to adequately address the failures of legislation associated with the civil rights movement (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Saddler, 2005; Taylor, 1998). "CRT [Critical Race Theory] can be a powerful lens through which to investigate the current state of affairs in public education today, fifty years after *Brown,* when schools are more segregated than ever" (Saddler, 2005, p. 43). More importantly, the theory has some basic tenets that are applicable to this study.

The first tenet of Critical Race Theory is that race and racism are daily fixtures that permeate through the lives of all Americans (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Saddler, 2005; Tate 2005; Taylor, 1998). Taylor (1998) noted that the theory challenges the notion that the white experience is the norm against which to all cultures are measured by in America, rather the experiences of minorities are used to explore the experiences of minorities. Therefore, the theory "openly acknowledges that perceptions of truth, fairness, and justice reflect the mindset, status, and experience of the knower" (Taylor, 1998, p. 122). Interest convergence is another tenet of the Critical Race Theory. Taylor (1998) pointed out interest convergence occurs when "the interests of blacks in achieving racial equality have been accommodated only when they have converged with the

interests of powerful whites" (p. 123). DeCuir and Dixson (2004) suggested interest convergence occurred in higher education when predominantly white institutions recruited African American football players because of their athletic ability, not to diversify the team. Finally, Critical Race Theory is a critique of liberalism. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) stated that three notions have been embraced by liberal ideologists: colorblindness of the law, the law is neutral, and change should occur incrementally. For this particular study, a critical race theorist might contend that the law was neither color blind nor neutral for the participants. A different set of laws existed for the participants than other students at the institution because of their race. The mere fact that the institution was not integrated until 5 years after the Court ordered all institutions to be desegregated was a testament to the incremental changes that occurred. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) argued liberalism is detrimental to people of color and only ignores the problem associated with race and racism in America.

Critical Race Theory allows for story telling (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Saddler, 2005; Tate, 2005; Taylor, 1998). Taylor (1998) contended

> Stories can not only challenge the status quo, but they can help build consensus and create a shared, communal understanding. They can, at once, describe what is and ought to be. As a result, CRT [Critical Race Theory] scholars often use storytelling as a way to engage and contest negative stereotyping. This strategy makes use of the experiences of people negatively affected by racism as a primary means to confront the beliefs held about them by whites. (p. 122)

Tate (2005) further pointed out that storytelling helps others understand some of the injustices related to race and provide an opportunity to examine how class, race, gender,

religion, and societal policies intersect. Saddler (2005) argued that storytelling helps individuals manage reality. Moreover, Fields-Smith (2005) stated "the purpose of remembering and understanding history is not to return to the past. Rather, educators can glean from history cultural facts that offer keys to success in the present" (p. 134).

Given that the participants were the first African Americans to attend the institution, it was imperative that race and racism be explored in the study. Critical Race Theory provided a framework to explore race with the participants. The theory also provided support and an explanation for convergent and divergent occurrences during the analysis of data.

Research Questions. The research questions that were used to understand the experiences of the participants are: (a) What factors contribute to African Americans staying and graduating from an institution he or she integrated? and (b) What are the reasons some participants identify for departure from the institution?

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Methodological Framework

A grounded theory research methodology was used to conduct this study. The purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theory about a phenomenon that is grounded in the data collected during a study (Charmaz, 2006; Willig, 2008). McGhee, Marland, and Atkinson (2007) stated, "Grounded theory studies often take a new perspective on an old issue" (p. 340). Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glasser and Anslem Strauss in 1967 (Charmaz, 2006; Morse, 2009; Willig, 2008). Since then Glasser and Strauss have differed on several aspects of the original theory and several versions of grounded theory have emerged. Glaserian or classic grounded theory is defined as the version of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss and later revised solely by Glaser (Cooney, 2010; Horton, 2010). Straussian grounded theory is the version of grounded theory developed by Julia Corbin and Anselm Strauss (Cooney, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Holton, 2010). Constructivist grounded theory was developed by Kathy Charmaz (Cooney, 2010; Morse, 2009). For this study, constructivist grounded theory was used to generate a theory to understand the persistence and attrition of African Americans who integrated a southern, urban university.

Prior to discussing constructivist grounded theory, it is important to have an understanding of constructivism. Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified constructivism as a paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), "A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world" (p. 107). In

constructivism, the purpose of research is to understand and reconstruct meaning for the participant.

> Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding constructions. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110-111)

In other words, reality for a constructivist is not objective. Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) encouraged the researcher to choose a paradigm that is congruent with their concept of reality. Constructivism view of reality is aligned with my personal beliefs and assumptions about reality. I firmly believe there is no single reality. Rather, I think multiple realities exist because an individuals' race, age, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, political affiliation, and educational attainment level all influence his or her worldview and perceptions. Also, I think it is through our interaction with others who have had different experiences than our own that we expand and better define our worldview. Ironically, constructivism also maintains it is through the interaction between the researcher and the participant that knowledge is refined and co-created.

Constructivist grounded theory is often associated with the works of Kathy Charmaz (Cooney, 2010; Morse, 2009). Charmaz (2009b) acknowledged constructivist grounded theory is a modern-day revision of Glaser and Strauss's original theory. Classic grounded theory "assumes discovery of data in an external world by a neutral, but expert observer whose conceptualizations arise from the data. Data are separate facts from the observer and . . . should be observed without preconception" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 138).

Constructivist grounded theory assumes that multiple realities exists, data is mutual constructed between the researcher and the participant, and the researcher experiences and values affect data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). In all versions of grounded theory, data collection and data analysis occur simultaneous (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Holton, 2010; Willig, 2008). However, the researcher is viewed as an objective, neutral participant in data collection and analysis in most versions of grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2009b; Holton, 2010). In constructivist grounded theory, the researcher acknowledges "subjectivities enter the analysis as well as data collection" (Charmaz, 2009b, p. 140). Therefore, data collection and analysis are neither neutral nor free of biases. As a matter of fact, constructivist grounded theorist recognize the co-construction of data influence the data analysis (Charmaz, 2009b). Also fundamental differences exist in coding between the variants of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Kendall, 1999). Glaserian and Straussian grounded theory advocate identifying a core category (Cooney, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Holton, 2010; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). The core category is the main phenomenon that captures the participants' perception of the studied phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). However, constructivist grounded theory does not seek to identify a core category (Charmaz, 2006; Holton, 2010; Morse, 2009). Charmaz (2006) stated constructivists do not seek to find a single variable to describe a phenomenon but "aim to show the complexities of particular worlds, views, and actions" (p. 132).

Selection of Participants. The sampling for this study was purposive. The participants for this in-depth interview study were African Americans who integrated a previously all-white southern university in 1959. A total of eight individuals integrated

the institution. However, one of the individuals has died. Therefore, the seven remaining individuals were the only people who qualified to participate in this study.

Gaining Access to Participants. The researcher submitted an IRB application to the institution. After I received approval from IRB, I began to contact the participants. Since data were collected over the summer, gaining access to the participants of this study was difficult. First, many of the participants are at least 68 years of age and all have retired from their careers. It was difficult contacting some individuals because they were vacationing and/or spending time with friends and families. In addition, only five of the seven participants still reside in the city where the institution is located. Therefore, I first contacted the participants who still resided in the community and established a relationship with them in an effort to gain access to the other participants.

Prior to the first interview, a concerted effort was made to ensure that the participants understood my purposes for conducting the study, the importance of telling their stories, and their rights as a participant in the study. In addition, each participant was given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and was given the option to continue with the interview or withdraw from the study. The participants were also asked to participate in an initial telephone interview and were informed follow-up interviews would occur. During my initial conversation with some of the participants, I was informed another researcher had conducted research interviews a few months prior to being contacted by me. Therefore, some of the participants were reluctant to conduct another interview. In order to accommodate those individuals' concerns, I revised the interview protocol for those individuals and only conducted one interview with those individuals. For one of the participants, interview questions were submitted via email. I

revised the number of questions to ask those individuals. I chose the most relevant questions and eliminated questions that had been answered thoroughly by others or were found to be irrelevant to the study after conducting interviews with the other participants.

Data Collection.

Interviews. The primary method used to gather the qualitative data was semi-structured interviews. All participants were interviewed via phone with the exception of one who submitted answers to questions via email. The in-depth telephone interviews were recorded with a cell-phone digital recorder. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes to 1½ hours in length. The participants were interviewed from one to four times.

Participants who graduated were asked all of the questions below except questions 12 and 13. Those participants who did not graduate and those who left the institution but graduated from another institution were asked all questions below with the exception of questions 9, 10, and 13. Participants who left the institution but returned years later and graduated were asked all questions below except questions 9 and 10. For the participants who were reluctant to participate in this study, I did not ask the individuals questions 3 and 6. The purpose of asking the aforementioned questions was to generate an initial conversation about the participants' experiences. However, other questions were asked during the initial interview for clarification or for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. After analyzing the participants' responses, additional questions were asked in follow-up interviews. The researcher continued to collect and analyze data until no new information emerged (Charmaz, 2006).

1. Tell me about your decision to attend the Canaan State University.
2. Describe your first day of class.

3. Describe a typical day when you were a student at the Canaan State University.
4. What was it like being a student in class?
5. What was it like being a black student on campus? How did it help or hinder the pursuit of your education?
6. What were some of the typical phrases I would have heard if I was one of the first Black students at the university? From whom did you hear these phrases?
7. Describe your relationships with the other “Canaan State Eight" students.
8. Describe a time that you felt connected to the campus.
9. Why did you graduate, or what happened that helped you to graduate? Who helped you?
10. Can you remember some activities you participated in and tell me about the ones that stand out in your mind that helped you complete your degree?
11. Tell me about your friends on campus.
12. Why didn't you graduate, or what happened that contributed to your leaving the University?
13. Why did you return to the institution years later after departing?
14. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about the university changed since leaving it?
15. Would you like to share information about other events or incidents that you did not mention earlier?

The entire interviews were transcribed and include all nonverbal sounds (such as pauses and laughs). As Seidman (2006) noted, “A detailed and careful transcript that re-creates the verbal and non-verbal material of the interview can be of great benefit to the

researcher who may be studying the transcript months after the interview occurred" (p. 116). I personally transcribed each interview. The transcription ranged from 45 minutes to 6 hours.

Documents. Document analysis was the other method used to gather the qualitative data for this study. Over the past 50 years, the participants have conducted numerous interviews with various media sources. For example, articles from local newspapers and university publications were some of the documents gathered and analyzed. In addition, there was a documentary made by one of the local television station. These sources were utilized to generate questions, to validate the participants' experiences, and to understand the perspective of the culture during that time period. In addition, the participants were asked to submit diaries and/or other artifacts they may have gathered over the years that document their experiences. One participant submitted a web source from an organization that had recognized their accomplishments and achievement to African American history. Although the source substantiated some information provided by the participants and other sources, it was not used in this study as a source. Corbin and Strauss (2008) noted such documents "can be used as both primary and secondary supplemental data, for making comparisons, and act as the foundation for developing general theory" (p. 42).

Researcher. In constructivist grounded theory, "the researcher is more than a witness, he or she actively constructs a particular understanding of the phenomenon under investigation" (Willig, 2008, p. 48). Charmaz (2009b) noted the researcher and participant co-construct data in a constructivist ground theory study. According to Charmaz (2009b), "Data are not separate from either the viewer or the viewed. Instead,

they are mutually constructed through interaction" (p. 138). Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified the researcher as the orchestrator of knowledge whose values are instrumental in shaping the research results. Therefore, the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants served as a source of data for this constructivist grounded theory study.

"Where, when, and how we ask questions in the field matter, as well as which questions we ask" (Charmaz, 2009a, p. 55). It is through prior knowledge, hunches, and experiences that the researcher determines which information to investigate by the questions he or she asks (Charmaz, 2009a; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011). Thus, the researcher influenced the information the participants disclosed by the questions he asked. The relationship that exists between the researcher and participants also influences the data collected (Charmaz, 2009a; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011). As researchers (Charmaz, 2009a; Charmaz & Bryant, 2011) have suggested, establishing a positive relationship with the participants, showing empathy during the interview process, and knowing the appropriate extent to which to pursue information about incidents and events can result in the researcher gathering a greater depth and breadth of information. Therefore, I established a strong rapport with the participants and made a concerted effort to be more attentive to meeting their needs than my own during data collection. For example, I let each participant decide the best date and time to conduct their phone interview. When some participants had to reschedule, I also let the participants dictate the time and date of the rescheduled interviews. The data collected and analyzed was used to interpret the findings and generate a theory. Different researchers can reach different conclusions, depending on "the researcher's interests, standpoints, and relative and changing positions

during data collection and analysis" (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011, p. 304). Therefore, I closely followed the guidelines associated with conducting constructivist grounded theory studies when analyzing data and generating the theory.

Data Analysis and Representation. Data analysis for this study followed guidelines and procedures identified by Charmaz (2006, 2009b) for conducting a constructivist grounded theory study. Data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Willig, 2008). Once data were collected, I analyzed the data immediately and used the findings to develop questions for the next interview.

Charmaz (2006) noted the first step in data analysis for constructivist grounded theory is to code the data. According to Charmaz (2006), "Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and account for each piece of data" (p. 43). Initial coding is the first phase of coding (Charmaz, 2006). During initial coding, I closely followed the recommendations of several researchers (Charmaz, 2006; Huberman & Miles, 1998; LeCompte, 2000; Maxwell, 1996; Seidman, 2006). I used such strategies as examining segments of data from interviews word-by-word, line-by-line, and/or incident to incident. In addition, I read through the data line-by-line, marking relevant text and making notes in the margins to assist with data reduction. As suggested by Charmaz (2006), I also used the constant comparative method strategy (comparing incidents and statements within the same interview and/or other interviews for similarities and differences). Charmaz (2006) strongly advocated "staying close to the data and when possible, starting from the words and actions of your respondents, preserves the fluidity of their experience and gives you new ways of looking

at it" (p. 49). I attempted not to deviate from the words used by the participants to describe their experiences and feelings. For example, one of the initial codes, benign neglect, was used by a participant and eventually became the term used for feeling ignored, isolated, invincible, and abandoned. In addition, the researcher moved through the data quickly, used simple and short codes, and remained open-minded to changing codes later, as suggested by Charmaz (2006).

To assist me with the coding process, I wrote memoranda to myself after each interview, as recommended by Maxwell (1996), about the process and my thoughts about the data. "Memo writing is a continual process that helps to raise the data to a conceptual level and develop the properties of each category. Memos also guide the next steps in further data collection, coding, and analysis" (Holton, 2010, p. 33). Charmaz (2006) also pointed out memos are useful to assist the researcher in developing questions and concepts to further examine with the participants to close gaps in the data collection. Therefore, each memoranda had questions to ask the next set of participants being interviewed and questions to follow up with the participant previously interviewed. In addition to the memos, I also had a conversation with my peer debriefers, via phone and email, to discuss my analysis strategies and to ensure that my findings were not clouded by my own subjectivities.

Focused coding is the second phase of coding data in a constructivist ground theory study. Focused coding is "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data. One goal is to determine the adequacy of those codes" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 56). She noted focused coding requires the researcher to return to the participants to further examine earlier assumptions. This included looking

across the participants' interviews and comparing data to data. During follow-up interviews, I asked questions to clarify and verify what other participants had discussed and to ensure my hunches about the data were correct. This was extremely useful when a participant made a statement and indicated he/she was certain about the information provided or there was there was uncertainty about an event and/or incident.

After the data were reduced and assigned codes, the focused codes and memoranda were used to develop categories, "these designate the grouping of instances (events, processes, occurrences) that share central features or characteristics with one another" (Willig, 2008, p. 35). Charmaz (2006) emphasized each category should be clearly defined, have identifiable properties, and convey the relationships between other categories. She strongly recommended using theoretical sampling to fully develop categories. "The main purpose of theoretical sampling is to elaborate and refine the categories constituting your theory. You conduct theoretical sampling by sampling to develop the properties of your category(ies) until no new properties emerge" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96). As suggested by Charmaz (2006), the researcher used theoretical sampling to decrease gaps in existing categories and to refine categories. This involved comparing existing codes with prior and emerging codes, seeking additional information from participants about unanswered questions or underdeveloped concepts, and investigating new concepts and ideas with participants (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, as recommended by Willig (2008), negative cases (situations, events, or occurrences that are different) were examined. For example, only one of the participants recollected a particular incident. After interviewing other participants, it was discovered the participant involved in the incident was the only person who had an interest in attending the event. Therefore,

the incident was found to be valid and applicable to that one participant. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), "No matter how enamored the investigator may be of a particular concept, if its relevance to the phenomenon under question is not proven through continued scrutiny, it must be discarded" (p. 7).

The data analysis process of collecting data, analyzing data, writing memos, developing and refining categories, and conducting theoretical sampling was an on-going process. Data collection stopped when categories were saturated, no new information emerged about the properties of the theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006). Finally, Charmaz (2006) recommended using the memos related to each category to organize data to generate the theory. Using the results from this study, a theory was generated and is presented in chapter 4.

Trustworthiness and Rigor of Study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested using alternative terms to address rigor and trustworthiness in qualitative studies (credibility instead of internal validity; transferability instead of external validity or generalizability; dependability instead of reliability; objectivity instead of confirmability). Merriam (1995) argued that regardless of the kind of research (quantitative or qualitative) rigor and trustworthiness is necessary

to ensure the findings and conclusions of a study are accurate. In this study, I employed multiple procedures and techniques to ensure both rigor and trustworthiness.

Several qualitative techniques were used in this study to establish credibility. Triangulation, the use of multiple data sources, perspectives, and/or data collection methods to confirm the findings of a study, is one of the most widely used techniques in qualitative research (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Barbour, 2001; Byrne, 2001;

Creswell & Miller, 2000; Mathison, 1988; Maxwell, 2009; Merriam, 1995; Patton, 1999; Shenton, 2004). Patton (1999) stated, "A common misunderstanding about triangulation is that the point is to demonstrate different data sources or inquiry approaches yield essentially the same result. But the point is really to test for such consistency" (p. 1193). However, Polkinghorne (2005) noted triangulation helps the researcher have more than one perspective of the experience being studied. Several forms of triangulation have been associated with qualitative research: methodological triangulation, data triangulation, analyst/investigator triangulation, and theory triangulation (Bitsch, 2005; Byrne, 2001; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Mathison, 1988; Patton, 1999). Data triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data to ensure that more than one source of information is included in the findings (Bitsch, 2005; Johnson, 1997; Mathison, 1988; Patton, 1999). For this study, I used data from interviews, documents, and the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants to analyze the research questions and generate a theory. Barbour (2001) pointed out that the absence of congruence in data sources should not be grounds for refutation, but assists in complimenting the findings for the phenomenon being studied.

Peer debriefing is another technique used in qualitative research to ensure credibility in a study (Bitsch, 2005; Byrne, 2001; Cooper, Brandon, & Lindberg, 1997; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Merriam, 1995; Shenton, 2004; Spall, 1998; Spillett, 2003). Peer debriefing is defined as "the process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). A peer debriefer can challenge

researcher's assumptions and interpretations, offer suggestions on interpretations and analysis, and/or provide insight from another perspective (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Spall, 1998; Spillett, 2003). For this particular study, I had two peer debriefers who I have professional and personal relationships with and who are familiar with qualitative research methodology.

Spillett (2003) stated many threats to credibility occur during the collection of data and analysis of data. Therefore, I met with each peer debriefer prior to collecting data and addressed their duties and responsibilities as it pertains to this study and addressed any concerns they may have had. In addition, we discussed how, when and where debriefing sessions would occur. During this study, peer debriefers were given transcripts of each participant's interview and asked to provide feedback and insight on each interview. In addition, each peer debriefer was given copies of all documents (newspaper articles, pictures, videotapes, etc.) that were used in this study. Finally, the peer debriefers were asked to critically examine and provide feedback on all data analysis.

Another way to ensure credibility in a qualitative study is to conduct member checks (Anfara et al., 2002; Barbour, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Maxwell, 2009; Merriam, 1995; Morrow, 2005; Sandelowski, 1993; Shenton, 2004; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). A member check is defined as

> systematically soliciting feedback about one's data and conclusions from the people you are studying. This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the

> perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstandings of what you have observed. (Maxwell, 2009, p. 244)

Member checking can be problematic for the participants and researcher. Some participants may want to appease the researcher and can feel inconvenienced by feeling compelled to read transcripts of the interviews or findings (Barbour, 2001; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Sandelowski, 1993). In addition, researchers may choose to disregard their own interpretations and accept the participants' at face value which could lead to inaccurate findings (Barbour, 2001). Furthermore, Sandelowski (1993) noted the researcher has the daunting task of representing different voices in the findings and conclusions. The participants may disagree with the researcher's findings because they do not see themselves in the findings and/or have opposite views of the same experience. Sandelowski (1993) recommended "researchers may offer the member some lay rendition of the findings written or presented in everyday language accessible to the general public" (p.7). Therefore, I sent an executive summary of the findings and asked three of the participants to confirm, refute, and/or provide feedback about whether or not I have accurately and completely reflected their experiences. An executive summary is less time-consuming for the participants to read and allow the researcher to communicate with the participants on how the findings were generated. In addition, I provided those participants an opportunity to read the preliminary findings in its entirety. Both convergent and divergent findings, along with the participants' perceptions, are addressed in the chapter 4 of the dissertation.

Although the findings of this study are not to be applicable to all African Americans who integrated all white colleges/universities, I addressed transferability of the study to enhance trustworthiness. In qualitative study, transferability is addressed by purposive sampling and providing thick description (Barbour, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Firestone, 1993; Johnson, 1997; Maxwell, 2009; Merriam, 1995; Shenton, 2004). As Barbour (2001) noted, purposive sampling allows the researcher to control sample biases and to explore outliers and exceptions in greater detail to strengthen findings and conclusions. For this study, only eight individuals were involved in integrating the institution. Therefore, the researcher could closely examine outliers. However, sample bias was not a concern for this study. Thick description is "providing enough information/description of the phenomenon under study so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred" (Merriam, 1995, p.58). The researcher used thick description throughout the entire study. Thus the transferability of this study lies with the reader's, not the researcher's, ability to determine the extent that the characteristics, findings, and conclusions may be similar to their own study.

The dependability of a qualitative study consists of the extent to which the findings of the study would be consistent if replicated by someone else with similar participants (Bitsch, 2005; Merriam, 1995; Shenton, 2004). Triangulation of data is a strategy suggested to establish dependability (Anfara et al., 2002; Merriam, 1995; Shenton, 2004). This technique was employed in this study. Merriam (1995) explained dependability is concerned with "whether the results of a study are consistent with the data collected" (p.56).

The purpose of objectivity in a qualitative study is to emphasize "the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). Two techniques were used to establish objectivity in this study: triangulation and a subjectivity statement (Anfara et al., 2002; Merriam, 1995; Shenton, 2004). As previously stated, data triangulation was used in this study. Several researchers suggested including a subjectivity statement (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Merriam, 1995; Morrow, 2005; Patton, 1999). A subjectivity statement allows a researcher to address how their experiences, values, perspectives, and assumptions may influence and/or affect the study's findings. (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Patton, 1999). Therefore, I have included a subjectivity statement below to assist in establishing rigor and trustworthiness in this study.

Ethical and Political Considerations. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggested researchers "need to be both mindful and active in protecting our research participants (and ourselves) from harm and undue risks" (p. 277). Therefore, a concerted effort was made to not provide identifiable information about the participants nor institution. For example, the researcher did not identify the gender of the participant nor any personal information that could be directed linked to the individual. In addition, the researcher replaced the real institution name with the fictitious name used in this study with brackets. There was some concern political issues could emerge as this study was conducted. The political issues could be generated by concerns of current university administrators about how much of the participants' experiences should be disclosed to the public. Also, the institution currently has a large group of African American students attending the university and the findings could have created some hostility about the

institution for those currently and formerly in attendance. However, no political issues emerged.

It should be noted the participants integrated the institution during a time in which racial segregation was a cultural norm in America. Some of their experiences may be viewed by many today with disgust or as contemptible. Therefore, I was extremely careful to describe the participants' experiences in an objective manner and made every attempt to illustrate my findings with statements made by the participants. The purpose of this study was not to judge the behavior or actions of the participants or those they interacted with, but to generate a theory that explained what attitudes, skills, and resources or lack of contributed to some students graduating and others departing the institution.

Risks, Benefits, and Reciprocity. The information collected from this study was used to understand the experiences of African Americans who integrated a southern urban university during the 1950s. No foreseeable risks existed with this study. All tape recordings and transcripts will be kept in a secure location and destroyed upon publication of the article(s) and dissertation based on the analyses. One of the benefits of this study is it may encourage other individuals to explore the experiences of students who integrated colleges and universities and record their experiences. Currently, a small body of research exists on African Americans who endured adversities to be educated at once-segregated institutions of higher learning in America. Since the 50th anniversary of the integration of the institution has passed, the findings from this study provide a historical account of the experiences of the individuals and will amplify the voices that have been kept silent for over 50 years.

Subjectivity Statement. Peshkin (1988) declared "one's subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed. It is insistently present in both the research and nonresearch aspects of our lives" (p. 17). Like all other researchers, I have subjectivities that influenced my research, especially for this particular study. In particular, as an African American male who attended a predominantly white institution of higher education in a southeastern state, I am cognizant of the covert (not being recognized by the professor when raising your hand to ask a question or participate in the class discussion) and overt (being referred to as "you people" or called a derogatory name) discrimination that racial minorities experience in the classroom. This knowledge gives me an insider's perspective that allows me to empathize with the participants and, when necessary, share my own experiences. In addition, I have nearly nine years of professional work experience at predominantly white institutions, a Master's degree in higher education administration, and I am currently pursuing a doctorate degree in the same field of study. Therefore, my world view of higher education is highly influenced by my educational and work experiences. These experiences serve as the moral and social underpinnings for my unyielding belief that all individuals should be given an opportunity to attend a postsecondary institution at little or no cost. Furthermore, I think that it is incumbent upon higher education administrators to establish policies, programs, and services that create an environment where all students feel welcome and all differences (ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and mental/physical disability) are accepted and respected.

It was essential that I was keenly cognizant of my subjectivities prior to conducting the study. Also, it was important that I continued to monitor my subjectivities

throughout the study. To ensure that my subjectivities were not influencing my interpretation of the study, Johnson (1997) suggested a researcher should identify strategies that will be used to address potential researcher's biases. Therefore, I employed several qualitative research techniques in my study (triangulation, member checks, and peer debriefing). These techniques helped to ensure that academic rigor was maintained in the study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The findings of this study are reported in this chapter. The chapter is divided into five parts: the participants, reasons for attending the institution, factors contributing to graduation, reasons for departing from the institution, and the emergent grounded theory. The theory that is reported at the end of this chapter is based on the triangulation of data from interviews, document analysis, and the co-construction of data between the researcher and participants.

The Participants

A total of seven individuals participated in this study. Rather than discuss each one individually, I discussed the participants as a collective group to ensure anonymity. Each of the participants had to take an English proficiency exam to be admitted to Canaan State University. As high school students, they were some of the best and brightest students in their respective schools. Many graduated with honors and one of the participants was the salutatorian of her class. In addition, many had scholarship offers to attend other institutions of higher learning. As a matter of fact, while their court case was still being litigated, three of the participants attended other colleges and universities and transferred back to Canaan State University in 1959 in order to integrate it. Of the eight individuals who integrated the institution, only three individuals graduated within the first six years of attending. After leaving Canaan State University, one of the individuals returned to the institution years later and graduated. The three individuals who transferred to other institutions of higher learning all graduated. Only one of the eight students did not graduate from any college or university. Professionally, they worked in education as

school teachers and college professors, served in the Unites States Armed Force, and worked for state and federal governments in such capacities as an Attorney and with the Federal Aviation Administration and United States Copyright Office. One of the eight individuals succumbed to bone cancer on January 15, 2011. The other seven individuals have all retired and are living in various regions of the country. However, the majority still reside in or near the city where Canaan State University is located.

Reasons for Attending the Institution. The participants identified several reasons for deciding to attend and integrate Canaan State University. One of the major reasons the participants decided to attend the institution was parental involvement. As one participant said,

> Well, to tell you the truth, [I decided to attend because of] my parents. I was unaware of what was going on. . . And so even though I kind of had my heart set on going somewhere else. They decided that maybe I ought to do this. So, that's really why I did go. It's not because I knew anything about it. It's a decision they made and of course I went along with it.

One participant's father said, "You can live here and take care of me because I'm getting sick and feeble and I need you here." The participant noted, "Well, that's all he needed to tell me. . . 'I said I'm going to stay here dad and take care of you'." Another participant recalled being urged by members of the church to attend the institution. For other participants, the decision to attend was based on finances. One of the participants indicated, "The other black institutions in the area were a little bit higher. I had an older brother in college who was siphoning off some of the resources I would have needed to go to school." In addition, one of the participants through their involvement with the

NAACP recognized the financial burden being placed on all Black families living in the city and surrounding areas.

> I and my family's interest in seeking to integrate [Canaan] State was sparked in large part by our participation and membership in the NAACP. The NAACP and my family and I had recognized the injustice that was associated with preventing Blacks from attending [Canaan] State and by denying Black students the opportunity to attend [Canaan] State a special burden was placed on Black families most of whom had limited assets to begin with.

The same participant saw the injustice being done from a political perspective, as well. "A portion of our parent's property taxes was being used to help underwrite the cost of operating [Canaan] State University. So, it seemed a natural that we should be able to attend [Canaan] State" A similar feeling was echoed by another participant's parent. The participant's father said, "I pay taxes. And if I pay taxes you got as much a right to go to any school that's a state-supported school." After being asked by a teacher who wanted to attend Canaan State, another participant indicated, "I just did it as a joke. I knew my family could not afford it. But, I said I'll do it…I didn't know it was really a possibility."

Factors Contributing to Graduation.

Crossing the bridge, not carrying the cross. Those individuals who graduated from Canaan State University possessed attitudes and perceptions that differed from those who did not. One of the significant differences was the attitude about how they perceived their interaction with the white students and their reasons for being at the institution. As one participant stated, "I wasn't interested in becoming part of the social life of campus. I was just happy that I had a possibility of getting a degree." Even when

the participant thought the professors were not being fair when assigning their grades, the individual's response was "I didn't want that to bother me. But, still I thought that [I didn't receive a fair grade]. I didn't want that to interfere with my goal of getting that degree." Another participant exhibited the same attitude about unfair grading and being treated differently. The participant stated, "You had to work a little harder. You didn't get the same thing for the same effort and I accepted that" (WKNO, 2006). One of the special stipulations stated to each of the participants during orientation was that the university's requirement to participate in physical education had been waived for each of them. One of the participants who graduated said this about the physical education requirement waiver:

> Some students got upset because they didn't want us to take PE. I didn't. I didn't want to take PE. I'm glad that they didn't let me take PE. Because we played various games and sports in the neighborhood, I got plenty of PE. I didn't care. A lot of students took that as an insult or whatever. I considered that a blessing. I didn't want to take PE. I was very, very physical around my neighborhood playing all kinds of games and stuff.

Another participant who graduated indicated,

> I had self-confidence and also didn't have false expectations from the white man. I knew that they were either good, bad, or indifferent. And they were no different than any other persons on earth. I knew that you gained respect through your performance. If you performed you eventually got the admiration and respect (WKNO, 2006).

Using data from interviews, document analysis, and the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants, the researcher concluded two of the individuals who graduated regarded the ability to integrate and graduate from Canaan State University as an opportunity to cross a bridge, not carry a cross. The inability to become interwoven into the campus community was not viewed as a burden to bear. They regarded being able to take advantage of the unique opportunity to get a quality education at an affordable price as more important than being part of the social fabric of the institution. Although attending Canaan State may have been a bridge to cross over troubled waters, their primary focus was to graduate from the institution with the degree. They made a conscious decision not to let any discriminatory acts deter them from their primary goal. As one of the participants pointed out, "The negative never outweighed the positive for me…We only went to class and came home. We were not a part of the university. Some people felt that more than others. I was among those that didn't really care" (WKNO, 2006). These two participants had a nonchalant attitude about their lack of interaction with the white students, perceived the unfairness in grading as inconsequential, and the lack of physical contact with other white students as a blessing. Their primary focus was graduating. They did not have lofty expectations about how campus life would be nor did it really make a difference to them. As an African American who attended a predominantly white institution, I was able to relate to the experiences of willing to be uncomfortable at times and overlook racism (covert and overt) to remain focus on graduating. A strong commitment and intent to graduate from Canaan State University was evident with both individuals.

Paddling one's own canoe. One of the participants who graduated from Canaan State indicated attending Canaan State was a "golden opportunity" (Moore, 2009a, p. 1A). The individual had an older brother in school and a younger sister who would be attending college two years later (Moore, 2009b). This was the only feasible opportunity for the individual to receive a college education. Another participant was in the same predicament. The individuals stated, "Most of [my sisters and brothers] were finishing high school in the family. But, most of us could not envision [getting a] college degree because the money was not there" (WKNO, 2006). The same participant acknowledged being able to attend Canaan State was an opportunity to get a job other than being a maid (Moore, 2009b). Another participant who persisted and graduated had grown up in a neighborhood near factories and manufacturing plants. During that time, the participant recognized the aches and pains the individuals experienced working at those factories and manufacturing plants. The participant also acknowledged the opportunity for uneducated blacks were very limited and the ones for educated blacks were not a lot better (Moore, 2009f; WKNO, 2006). The participant noted, "It never crossed my mind that I would not graduate. My motivation for graduating was strong. I didn't want to end up working as a laborer at a factory."

The three participants who graduated from the institution within the first six years of attending understood the opportunity they would be afforded by getting a college degree. Being purely motivated to avoid the life that friends and neighbors were living, the participant knew the only way to avoid being destined to work as a laborer in one of the factories or manufacturing plant or becoming a maid in someone's household was to paddle their own canoe. The individuals were keenly cognizant that if the course of their

fate were to be changed, it would be by the effort they exerted through persisting and graduating from Canaan State University. Having a degree from Canaan State was a ticket to leave the neighborhood and reach for upward mobility. As an individual who grew up in impoverished conditions and was given an opportunity to attend a quality institution of higher learning on a full scholarship, the researcher was able to relate to the participants of this study who recognized the possibilities associated with obtaining a college education could offer. It was through self-motivation and determination that the participants persevered.

***Remembering my mother's wisdom*.** Parental involvement was influential in many of the participants' decisions to attend the university. However, it was the child rearing and socialization from the mother that was instrumental in helping one of the individuals persist to graduation. The participant stated,

> I was trying to get my degree. I didn't care. I really wasn't interested in socializing with them. I really wasn't. My mother taught us that we were just as good as anybody else. Growing up, I didn't have any hostility towards white people. But, I didn't pay them any attention either. They didn't mean anything to me.

In another instance, the participant acknowledged how the mother's parenting influenced his or her perception.

> As far as bemoaning the idea my going to [Canaan] State and not doing a lot of interacting with white people, I didn't care. Because my mother didn't fight against them [white people] that much. She did not praise them at all. She didn't have pictures of white folks hanging all around are walls. We had pictures of black folks hanging around our walls or neutral pictures.

The same participant recalled

> In your community, you were taught at an early age what to do [and] what not to do in order to move about without getting hurt or killed. You were well-schooled by your parents. By having met with incidents and having heard of incidents made you realize you had to act a certain way in order to survive (WKNO, 2006).

Only one of the participants who graduated indicated the socialization from the mother was paramount. Due to the frequency and level of passionate exhibited when discussing the lessons taught from home that influenced the behavior and perceptions of the participant, the researcher would be remiss to exclude it as a primary reason for the participant graduating. Throughout life and especially as a college student, I could recall the lessons my mother taught me about surviving in a hostile environment and the importance of being content with oneself. Through the words of wisdom taught by the mother, this participant was indifferent to the lack of interaction with whites and did not feel the need to establish a relationship with white classmates or be included in the social fabric of campus life. In addition, the participant had been taught how to behave and not behave around whites. The socialization the individual received from the mother throughout the years enabled the participant to be oblivious to the lack of interaction with the white students and persevere to graduation.

Living off the fat of the land. As stated earlier, parental support was an important factor in many of the participants' decisions to attend Canaan State. It was also instrumental in helping participants persist to graduation. One of the participants stated, "My mother made me believe if I held my head high and minded my own business and ignored the negative I would be ok" (WKNO, 2006).

The decision to attend Canaan State impacted one participant's family tremendously. When the participant's picture appeared in the local newspaper, the participant's mother was fired from her job. The mother of the participant was informed by her employer that "they could not fathom that the maid's daughter would be in the same university with their daughter. Their daughter would enter [Canaan] State in 1961." The vehicles of the participant's brothers were vandalized on their jobs and they had to begin to take the city bus to work. The participant also indicated the father was afraid their house would be bombed. The participant's father and his neighbors would sit up at night and keep watch in case a mob would try to bomb the house. In another incident, the participant was a cashier at a local store. After the owner of the store found out the participant would be attending Canaan State, the owner was considering firing the participant. The community immediately rallied around the participant and informed the owner if the participant was fired that those living in the neighborhood would not do business in the store. When discussing the support from the NAACP leaders and the community, the participant stated,

> They gave us great encouragement because they would remind us, those of us who were still there, that we were not just doing this for us but for generations to come. And that was the great support and encouragement that helped me along.

The participant identified the following reasons for graduating:

> I graduated because of the perseverance and that great determination that I wanted to finish that kept me moving, even though there were some courses I did not do well in. I was determined to go on and graduate and I did. And I received so much support from my family, even though things happened to the family. At home,

> they were supportive of me. My church members were very supportive of me. The neighborhood was so strong. The neighbors were so encouraging to me. It just made me want to go on.

Another participant pointed out, "in my community, a lot of [members of the community] hadn't finished high school. When they see me walking with my books, they would let me know how proud they were"(WKNO, 2006). In another instance, one of the participants who graduated from Canaan State reported receiving enormous support from the community and having strong support and encouragement from the family.

The three participants who graduated from Canaan State indicated their family and community were very supportive and encouraging. This support and encouragement gave the participants the will power to forge ahead and graduate. Like the kindness Pharaoh showed to Joseph in a time of scarcity (Gen. 45: 17-18), the participant's family and community provided the necessary support and encouragement during the many difficult days they encountered at Canaan State University. It should be noted even the students who did not graduate from the institution indicated receiving strong support and encouragement from their family and community. Some of this support and encouragement were instrumental in their decision to transfer to other institutions or to depart from college altogether. I remembered as a college student the importance of being able to call high school friends or call home to discuss issues and problems with my mother. It is through these experiences that I was able to co-construct knowledge with the participants about the importance of parental and community support.

Reasons for Departing from the Institution. The participants identified three primary reasons for deciding to depart the institution and transfer to other institutions or

leave higher education altogether. One of the reasons, benign neglect, was cited as problematic even by those who graduated. Another one of the reasons identified for leaving the institution was unique to only one of the individuals. Each of the reasons for departing the institution is discussed below.

Benign neglect. Every participant described being ignored in the class by professors and having no interaction with the white students in the classroom. Crawford (1959) reported in the institution's newspaper exactly one week after the semester had begun the "General student body attitude was one of avoiding the Negroes" (p. 2). One of the participants indicated,

> the students treated me, in my opinion, with what I would consider benign neglect. No one spoke to me during the class, seats on either side of me were left vacant, and when I went into the library and sat down at a table--students already at the table would get up and leave and I would end up with a whole table to myself.

Another participant acknowledged having a similar experience. The participant stated, "I noticed in my classes I would go and take me a seat. There was a seat vacant in front of me, a seat vacant behind me, a seat vacant on the side of me…on both sides of me." This benign neglect was also described by other participants and not only occurred in the classroom and library but also at a football game. One of the participants stated

> I went to one of those [football] games and really felt out of place and didn't stay. That helped me make up my mind to not come back. In the middle of the end zone seats at a game that appeared to be crowded, after a few minutes it looked

> like I was the only [one] in the stand. So, I made up my mind at that time it probably was not where I wanted to be.

Some form of benign neglect was described by each of the participants. Whether being ignored in the class by professors and students or having vacant seats on either side of them in the classroom, the participants understood they were not wanted at the institution. One of the participants stated, "Mostly, I was ignored by the white students. I was just there in the classroom—a cold and hostile classroom because of the stares from the white students." Many of the participants also recalled being told by the Dean of Students at orientation that they were not wanted on campus (Derks, 1998; Moore, 2009a, 2009e; WKNO, 2006). For some, the benign neglect was inconsequential, but for others it created a campus climate that became intolerable and resulted in their decision to depart the institution. Although the researcher never encountered the same degree of hostility as the participant, I can recall how uncomfortable it felt being the only African American in a college classroom.

Singing in a strange land. "The day we went to register I knew that was a strange thing." Those were the words spoken by a participant who had transferred to Canaan State from the local, private black college. The same participant further asserted,

> It was not a normal college life. I could not use the library. It was not like that at [the other college]. Nobody told me I had to be off the campus by 12. Nobody told me that I couldn't take PE. Nobody told me I could not be in crowds other than the eight [other Africans Americans] I was with.

Students who departed the institution seemed to have an expectation about what college life was supposed to entail. In particular, the participants who had transferred from

another college or had siblings who were enrolled in another college or university had a perceived notion of what it meant to be a college student. One participant who departed the institution stated, "I interacted with my friends. I had social activities. I participated in sports and I thought that's the way it was supposed to be. When I got to [Canaan State], it was altogether different." The same participant indicated it was like being in a foreign land (Moore, 2009d). Another participant voiced their discontent with their collegiate experience by stating, "I was miserable. It was not just the normal college atmosphere that I anticipated." A participant who had attended another college and transferred to Canaan State noted, "It was nothing like [the previous college] I attended. I think I would have given anything to [go back to the other college]." The same participant poignantly pointed out, "It looked like they did not want me to be there." One of the participants who entered as a freshman and had not attended another institution stated,

> I did not feel like I was getting the college experience. Friends of mine who had gone to other schools would become fraternity members and join student organizations and run for student government. Although it wasn't going to be forever denied me, it was denied that first year. I didn't feel like I had the support of the administration or the institutional members (WKNO, 2006).

Like the Jewish people who were held in captivity in Babylon and found it difficult to sing their songs in a strange land (Psalm 137:4), three of the participants yearned for the college life they had experienced and had heard about from friends and family. This yearning left them unable to be content with the campus climate at Canaan State and resulted in their departure from the institution. There was a feeling of strangeness and unfamiliarity. Canaan State was a poor fit with what their expectations of

what college should be. The lack of fit with the institution caused some individuals to move on to other colleges and universities. One participant dropped out and did not graduate from college at all and another individual returned years later finished the coursework and graduated. The other two individuals went on to graduate from other colleges and universities.

Achieving my goal. For one of the participants, the mission of integrating the institution had been accomplished.

> I decided to withdraw and transfer… I really felt at that time since the university was slowly but surely becoming more integrated; we had completed our first and second year there. I really felt that my work there was essentially done. I wanted to move on trying to complete my career.

This participant had also attended another college prior to transferring to Canaan State in 1959. The participant stated, "[I] felt very, very connected to that college even though I was only there for one year. I felt very, very at ease. But, at that the same time I could hardly wait to get to the [Canaan State]." The participant left an institution that was obviously an ideal campus environment to enter a hostile campus environment out of a sense of responsibility and obligation to integrate the institution. After achieving that goal, the participant thought it was time to pursue other endeavors that would result in career advancement. The participant transferred to another university and graduated from that institution. Although only one participant identified this as a reason for leaving the institution, this particular reason is unique to this one individual. As suggested by Willig (2008), negative cases (situations, events, or occurrences that are different) were examined during data analysis and should be reported.

Emergent Grounded Theory. The results of this study are summarized in Figure 1. The participants' decision to attend the institution was based on receiving financial assistance, support and encouragement from their parents and community, and opportunity to right an injustice. Once the participants entered the institution, their decision to depart or persist was based on institutional fit and attitude, parental and community encouragement, and the campus climate. Each factor is discussed below as it pertains to the results of the finding of this study.

Financial assistance. Each of the participants' tuition and fees were paid by the local chapter of the NAACP. In addition, some of the cost associated with their books was paid by the NAACP and community and local organizations. Receiving financial assistance definitely made a difference in the participants' decision to attend the institution. One of the participants who had gone to another college in 1958 and transferred to Canaan State in 1959 indicated, "My reasons for attending [Canaan State University] were purely financial." Another participant who also transferred from another college to Canaan State in 1959 stated, "I would have given anything to go back [to the other college]." However, that participant and all of the individuals expressed the cost of $82.50 per semester to attend Canaan State was a great bargain. So, the cost of attendance affected the participants' decision to attend. However, receiving financial aid was not enough of a reason for five of the eight students who integrated to continue to stay and persist to graduate from the institution. Receiving financial assistance from the NAACP and other organizations definitely made attending the institution affordable, but other factors such as a hostile campus climate and lack of involvement resulted in their departure.

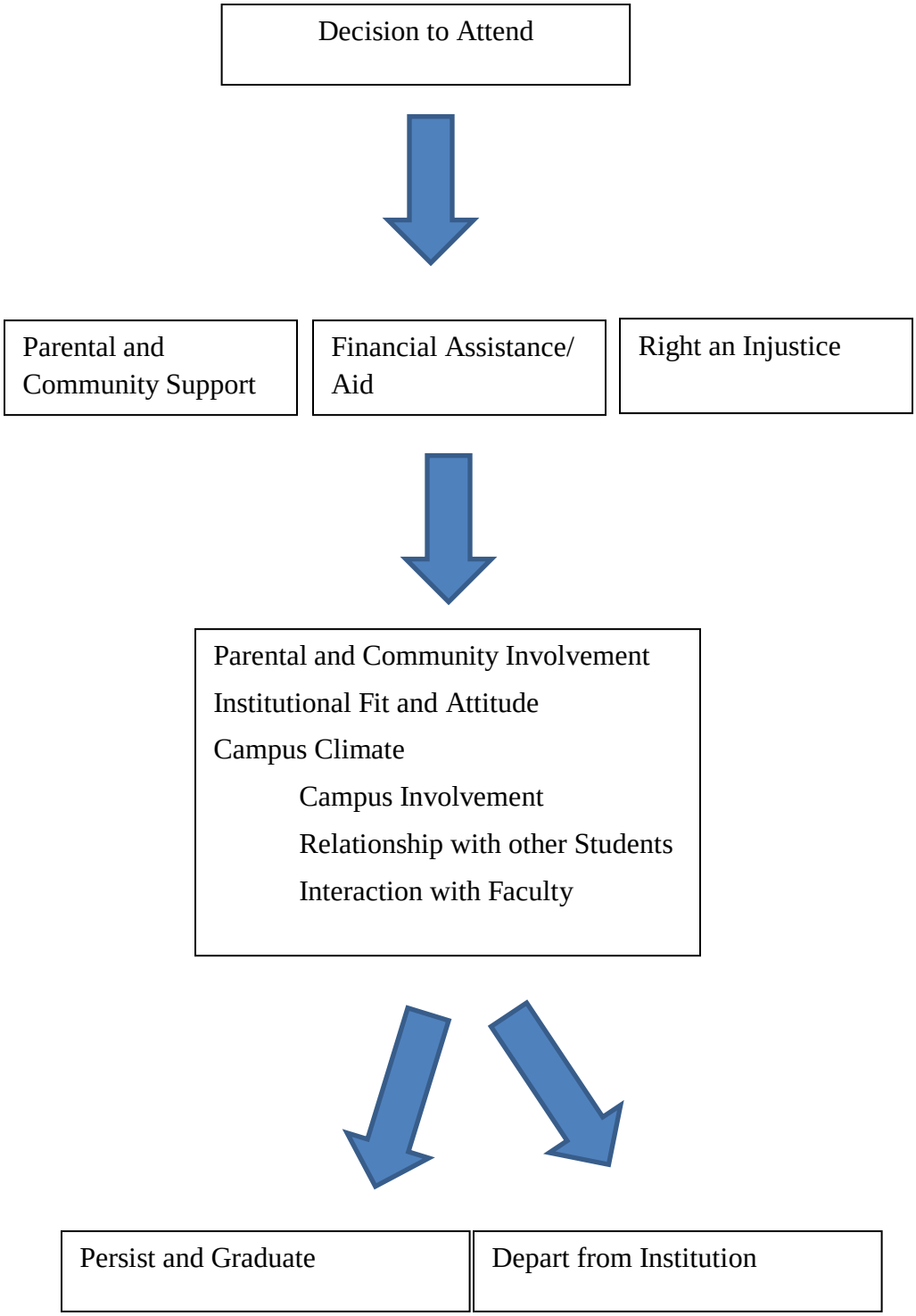

Figure 1. Emergent grounded theory diagram. This figure illustrates the emergent grounded theory from the findings of this study.

Parental and community involvement. Parental involvement was an important factor in the participants' decision to attend the institution. As one of the participant noted, "I had never heard of Canaan State." In addition, the same participant acknowledged not going to the side of the city where the institution was located prior to attending the institution. Parental involvement also played a vital role once they were enrolled. Each of the participants spoke of the unwavering support of their parents while enrolled at the institution. As a matter of fact, after one of the participant's mother died, the individual eventually decided to withdraw
from the university. Another participant identified making her mother proud as one of the reasons for wanting to do well. The participants who decided to depart from the institution did so with the approval and/or support of their parents.

These individuals received an abundant amount of community support. From standing guard and watching one of the participant's house to making sure it was not bombed to purchasing books for the participants, the community was fully behind making sure the participants had all the resources needed to be successful. A strong community bond surrounded the participants. One of the participants noted, "The church community, the fraternities and sororities, all pitched in and paid for those" individuals who had graduated in 1958 and wanted to attend other colleges and universities until they could enroll in Canaan State in 1959. Also, the local private black college allowed the participants to utilize the library and other facilities and provided tutorial assistance to some of the participants.

Parental and community involvement was instrumental in helping the participants while attending the institution. However, for some of the participants, it was not enough

to maintain their presence at the institution. Other factors were more compelling and resulted in the departure of five of the eight individuals who integrated the institution.

Institutional fit and attitude. Each of the participants had been informed about some of the potential pitfalls and difficulties he/she may encounter while attending Canaan State. As one of the participants noted,

> All of us knew we were going into what we would consider uncharted waters. We knew we were not going to [the local black college] where we would perhaps be welcomed with opened arms. We of course knew it could be a hostile environment. We knew the chances were very, very good that we would have some difficulty keeping up with our fellow students. Simply because of our high schools, we were not as up-to-date, were not as good as … as some of the other white high schools. We understood this. This was made very clear to us by the NAACP that we would have to really, really study. We would have to do the very, very best we could under the circumstances.

Three of the four participants who graduated from high school in 1958 attended other colleges until they were permitted to enroll in Canaan State University in 1959. One participant stated, "I attended [another college] for one year, so I knew what to expect from college life." However, another participant who also transferred into Canaan State indicated, "I was simply taking it one day at a time." For some of the participants, the collegiate experience was different than the expected college life. This caused a lack of fit with the campus environment. The incongruence and lack of fit resulted in many of the participants transferring to other colleges or universities and one dropping out of college completely.

Although all of the participants indicated they did not ever feel a connection to the institution, those who persisted and graduated were different in terms of how they viewed this connection. For example, one participant stated, "I didn't feel a real connection with the school itself. I didn't feel a kinship with the school at all. But, I wasn't hostile because of that. As I said I had blinders on out there." Those blinders referred to their need to keep their eyes on the prize of graduation. Others who persisted and graduated were focused on being a torch bearer for their family and community. Another participant recognized that by attending the institution it was a way out of the neighborhood and thus a chance to have a different life than friends and family. The majority of those who departed the institution were less willing to overlook some of the injustices and deleterious behavior from the white students and professors and adjust to the campus community that basically ignored their existence.

Campus climate. For this study campus climate is the term used to include the following factors: campus involvement, relationship with other students, and student-faculty interaction. Each of these factors affected how the participants perceived the campus climate. Living on campus and race are not being discussed in this section because the participants did not indicate either factor affected their decision to remain or depart from the institution. Instead, living on campus and race will be discussed in chapter 5 of this study.

Campus involvement. Each of the participants indicated they never felt connected to the campus as a student. Some participants reported only feeling a connection to the campus years later after being recognized by the institution and seeing some of the changes that had occurred on campus. Part of this lack of connection was the result of not

participating in any campus activities or being involved in any university-related social activities. Some of the participants acknowledged playing cards in the student center with the other African American students and occasionally with some white students. This was the extent of campus involvement for the participants.

The lack of involvement in campus life had a negative impact on some and led to their departure from the institution. When discussing some of the incidents that had occurred on the campus while attending, one of the participants who left the institution discussed the incidents of being called a "nigger" and one of the other Canaan State Eight student's gas tank being filled with sugar. The participant stated, "It was those sort of irritating events that made you not want to be a part of that college community." Conversely, the participant lamented about not being able to participate in sports at Canaan State. The participant played sports at another college prior to transferring to Canaan State. On the other hand, one of the individuals who persisted and graduated had a drastically different view about campus involvement. The participant noted, "Socially, I had plenty of other sisters and brothers to associate with and friends in the neighborhood. I did not yearn for the college campus life. I didn't." This individual relied on the association and relationship with family and friends to compensate for the lack of involvement in the campus community. None of the participants indicated ever being part of the social fabric of campus. Not being involved in the campus community did not matter to some but it was detrimental to others.

Relationship with other students. The relationship the participants developed with each other did not wholly influence their decision to stay or depart from the institution. One participant indicated going to register the junior year for classes and not

seeing any of the other Canaan State Eight students. The participant noted, "When I got home I did contact a couple of the students. And the ones I was able to get said they were not going back." The participant decided to not return to the institution. However, this was one of several factors that impacted the participant's decision not to return.

The relationship amongst the Canaan State Eight students served as a coping mechanism for many. As one participant stated, **"**We would meet periodically just to talk about our challenges and those challenges certainly included coping, keeping up with our classroom assignments, and trying to work together to keep up each other's spirits." But for other Canaan State eight students, it was extremely difficult for the students to develop a relationship with one another. One of the participants recalled, "I seldom saw the other seven students. I rode to school with three of the students. I had no classes with any of the seven other students." By the eight African Americans students not having any classes together, one of the participants noted "We never really studied together because we all had different courses." A participant summed up the relationship between the Canaan State Eight by stating, "As far as developing a bond with all of the students, I think we all certainly shared a very, very meaningful bond. As a matter of fact, a bond that even exists today." The relationship amongst the participants certainly was instrumental in many of the students coping with the campus climate.

Conversely, none of the participants indicated establishing a friendship with any of the white students. A participant recalled, "I did not make any friends. There were no students who would come up to me and introduce themselves to be my pal." This lack of relationship with one's peers contributed to a campus climate that was unfriendly and unwelcoming for many of the participants. Being ignored in classes by the white students

resulted in what one participant referred to as a "cold and hostile classroom." Once again, some of the participants were not affected by the lack of relationship with the white students. While for other participants, it was another factor that contributed to a negative perception of the campus community.

Student-faculty interaction. The interaction with faculty was a factor in the participants' perception of the institution's campus climate. Each of the participants had indifferent perceptions of the faculty. One of the participants stated, "as far as the faculty was concerned, the faculty, in my opinion, treated me respectfully. I experienced no discriminating or overly-supportive professors." This was a general consensus amongst most of the participants.

However, some of the participants remembered the name of one faculty member who they thought treated them with the utmost respect and was responsive in and out of class. As a matter of fact, one professor's name was mentioned by two of the participants. When recalling the name of one of their professors, one of the participants responded, "Oh my goodness. In my opinion, he was and I hopefully that he is still there, I am not sure. He was exceptional. He was an exceptionally good professor." When discussing feeling connected to the campus, the only incident one participant could identify as a time of being connected to campus was when receiving help with a project from a professor. The participant proclaimed, "I had one teacher and he was a biology teacher and he's still living now… He was one of the ones who took out time to work with me on a biology project and I applauded him for it." Another participant noted, "The students and professors were more accepting in the sciences once they realized that you knew the

subject matter. The students and professors in the liberal arts [area] were not as accepting."

Although the interaction with faculty members may not have been identified as a deciding factor in determining whether to stay and persist or depart from the institution, it definitely played a pivotal role in the participants' perception about the campus climate and environment. In particular, when you consider an individual's ability to recall the name of a professor after more than 50 years of attending an institution, the professor had to have had a significant impact, positively or negatively, on the individual's collegiate experience. None of the participants indicated being a part of the academic fabric of campus.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. As recommended by Kendall (1999), the generated theory "is compared to previous work as well as other literature and perspectives to validate or point out differences or gaps in current understanding of the phenomena" (p. 746). In addition, the researcher made recommendations for higher education administrators and policymakers based on the findings of this study. The limitations of this study are also discussed. Finally, the researcher suggested future research needed in the area of student retention.

Discussion of Findings

Historical perspective. It is important to have a historical understanding of the late 1950s to fully comprehend and appreciate the reasoning in the participants' decision to attend Canaan State University and to endure some of the situations that occurred. First, the technological advances that exist today did not exist then. No cell phones, email, fax machines, personal computers, or Internet existed during the 1950s. As a matter of fact, as one of the participants pointed out, long distance phone calls were expensive during that time period. Besides face-to-face communication, letter writing was the cheapest form of communication. Therefore, if a participant was having a bad day or endured unfair treatment in the classroom, the best and most affordable way to communicate with a friend attending another college or family member living away about the situation was to write a letter. It is also important to note integration was not the norm during this time period in the nation's southern states. One of the participants pointed out the city's bus system, restaurants, and other facilities were still segregated (Moore,

2009c). Although the institution within the city was integrated, the public school systems and all public facilities were still segregated.

The cost to attend Canaan State University was $82.50 per semester. It cost over $600 per semester to attend the historically black college located in the same city. The nearest state-supported African American university in the state was nearly three hours away. Many of the participants indicated their parents could not afford the room, board, transportation, and tuition cost associated with attending the only state-supported black university. It is important to note that the concept of federal student loans was just being introduced to the nation through the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (Thelin, 2004). Also, the Federal Pell Grant program did not exist. Therefore, Canaan State University was the most affordable option to many of the participants.

Charmaz (2006) stated the researcher should illustrate how their "grounded theory refines, extends, challenges, or supercedes extant concepts" (p. 169). Below, I have highlighted the similarities and differences amongst the findings from this study with existing research on student persistence and attrition.

Financial assistance. Consistent with other researchers' (Perna & Titus, 2005; Tinto, 1987, 1993) findings, the results of this study indicated cost of attendance was influential in the participants' decision to attend Canaan State University. The results of this study indicated receiving financial assistance did not encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities. This finding was similar to those of other researchers (Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990) but different than the findings of others (Hu, 2010). Even though the participants' entire tuition and some cost associated with their books was paid by the NAACP, financial assistance was not enough to keep five of

the eight students who integrated the institution from departing the institution or transferring to other institutions. This is congruent with Tinto's (1993) notion that "Financial impact is generally conditioned by the nature of student experiences on campus and the weighing of the costs and benefits of attendance" (p. 68). Given none of the participants indicated having received student loans, it is impossible to determine whether or not this would have affected their decision to stay or depart from Canaan State University.

Parental and community involvement. As noted by Fields-Smith (2005), "home, school, church, and community were intertwined intimately during segregated schooling, particularly in the South. This connectedness supported parent and community desires to secure education for their children" (p. 132). Her assertions are vividly illustrated in the results presented in this study. Parental and community support was abundant for each of the participants. The findings of this study support prior research conducted by several other researchers (Barnett, 2004; Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). They reported African Americans are socialized by their family about race and how to manage living in the white dominant society. For one of the participants, it was the wisdom that was learned from the mother that affected their perception and ability to navigate the campus climate at Canaan State University. Herndon and Hirt (2004) noted in Black families that fictive kinships are very influential and can provide both social and emotional support. "Fictive kinship networks may include neighbors, church members, and friends" (pp. 493-494). The results of this study were congruous with the findings of their study. It was members of the community, along with the parents, who provided support and encouragement and aided the participant in

persevering to graduation. In addition, Herndon and Hirt (2004) pointed out receiving a good education is perceived as a path way to economic prosperity in the African American community. For one of the participants who graduated, the individual perceived the opportunity to attend Canaan State as a way out of the neighborhood and a job working as a laborer in a factory or manufacturing plant. Finally, Tinto (1987, 1993) argued an individual must separate from their past communities in order to integrate to the campus and to persist. But three of the participants did not break ties with their families and were able to persist and graduate. This result is consistent with the findings of several other researchers (Guiffrida, 2004; London, 1989; Tierney, 1992; Tinto 2006-2007).

Institutional fit and attitude. According to Bean (2000), "institutional fit is a sense of fitting in with others at a college" (p. 219). Bean (2000) also noted it is important for students to feel they belong at the institution. He further suggested it is through an individual's locus of control that students make decisions about the institution. Those students with internal locus of control believe they control their own destiny. Whereas students who have external locus of control believe others are in control of their destiny. One of the participants exhibited internal locus of control. The individual was not concerned about the interaction with the students or the perceived subjective grading. Instead, the individual stayed focus on graduating. Consistent with other researchers (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005) an individual's personal motivation can lead to commitment to persist and graduate. For example, one of the participants admitted the motivation for graduating was to escape a career as a laborer in a factory or manufacturing plant in their neighborhood. Bean (2005) pointed out "Students evaluate

their experiences and form attitudes about college and that influence their intentions to stay enrolled and their decision to stay or leave. Anyone and everyone on campus can affect these attitudes" (p. 240). He noted faculty shaped the attitudes and had the greatest impact on retention. The findings of this study indicated the participants' white peers, not the institution's faculty, played the most vital role in shaping the attitudes and perception which affected retention.

Campus Climate.

Campus involvement. None of the participants were involved in any student organization, participated in any campus activities, or participated in any sports as a student at Canaan State University. Ironically, three of the participants who had attended other colleges were involved in sports, had been recognized with an award for work in an academic course, was an active member of an honor organization, and had pledged a fraternity prior to transferring to Canaan State University. It is impossible to assess whether being involved with campus activities would have impacted persistence as suggested by other researchers (Astin, 1984; Guiffrida, 2003; Kuh, et al., 2008; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Tinto, 1987, 1993, 2006-2007). The participants had learned by attending other colleges and being told by friends and family what a normal college life entailed. Therefore, they knew that their experiences were unique and drastically different from what they had experienced prior to attending Canaan State and what they had learned from others. According to Tinto (2006- 2007), "The classroom is, for many students, the one place, perhaps only place, where they meet each other and the faculty. If involvement does not occur there, it is unlikely to occur elsewhere" (p. 4). His assertion accurately portrayed the experiences of the participants. Many of the participants

admitted to not participating in class because of fear of being ignored by the professor and that lack of involvement extended to areas of campus life.

Relationship with other students. The results of this study indicated the lack of interaction with white students and being ignored by those students affected the participants' perception of the campus climate. This finding was inconsistent with the Cole (2008) results which indicated the relationship with faculty, not peers, was more crucial to student satisfaction for African Americans. The results from this study support Tinto's (1993) notion that failure to be academically or socially integrated does not necessarily lead to students departing the institution. Of the three individuals who graduated from the institution within six years of entering, none indicated being socially or academically connected to campus or satisfied with their collegiate experience. The participants' only friends on campus were among the circle of eight who helped integrate the institution. It was not until other African American students began to enroll that the circle of friendship increased.

Student –faculty interaction. Consistent with other researchers (Astin, 1984; Lundberg, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1997), the findings of this study indicated the participants' lack of quality and frequent interaction with the faculty did influence their satisfaction with their collegiate experience or affect persistence. Although the participants acknowledged being ignored by some professors and being fearful or participating in some classes, no one identified being unsatisfied with the professors as a reason for departing from the institution. Conversely, no participant identified having a positive relationship with a professor as being a reason for persisting and graduating. The majority of the participants were able to name a professor who they

admired and treated him/her fairly. The results of this study are incongruent with Cole (2008) who found that for African American students, being satisfied with faculty is more important than being satisfied with their peers. The participants in this study bemoaned being ignored by the white students more than not being recognized in class.

Living on campus. None of the students lived on campus. Each stayed with their parents during their entire collegiate career at Canaan State. Melendez and Melendez (2010) suggested for students living at home "the relationship with parents may be used as an anchor in navigating the world, and parents may be used as support systems to encourage and facilitate the college adjustment experience" (p. 428). The findings of this study partially support their findings. Nevertheless, there is no way to compare if living on campus or living off campus had a significant impact on the participants' perception of their collegiate experiences at Canaan State University.

Racism. During the process of conducting interviews, I was completely astonished that no one used the words racism, prejudice, or discrimination. One of the participants did acknowledge, "The minute we stepped on that campus in 1959 and we had to go to the president's office and they were carrying our books that was racism. That was the beginning of it." This statement referred to the students not being able to make their own schedule and not able to go to the bookstore to select their own books. Members of the administration selected their classes and books. The participants were presented their books in the president's office during orientation. The participant's statement only came after being specifically asked if race mattered in terms of how members of the Canaan State Eight were treated. Another participant had a different perception and seemed to echo the feelings of the other participants. The participant

acknowledged the white students "did not take any affirmative action to hurt me. But, they did not do anything to make you feel like you should be comfortable."

Recommendations for Higher Education Administrators

Although providing adequate financial assistance and aid to students may ensure that they can attend the institution, it is imperative that a campus climate exists which encourages student involvement and makes students feel welcome and included in the campus community. As the results of this study showed, a student can be very involved in campus life at one institution and be completely uninvolved on another campus. This is not coincidental. The campus climate can encourage or discourage student involvement. Administrators should implement programs and policies whose aim is to develop a campus climate that is inclusive and welcoming where each student feels like a member of the campus community.

The student-faculty relationship was not identified as the primary reason for the participants staying at or leaving the institution. However, each participant was able to recall the name of a faculty member who was respectful, supportive, and encouraging. As other researchers (Astin, 1984; Lundberg, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1997) have pointed out, the student's quality of interaction with faculty can influence a student's perception of the campus climate and influenced the decision to persist or depart. Nora and Wedham (1991) also pointed out support and encouragement from faculty, teaching assistants, and other academic staff can have a positive effect on students' decision to persist and graduate even when there are issues with grades and can offset the negative effects of work and family responsibilities. Tinto (2006-2007) noted

linking student retention with the tenure process is one way to increase the role of the faculty in the institution's student retention efforts.

Parental support and involvement was evident in the success of the participants in this study. McCarron and Inkelas (2006) proposed constructively including parents in the collegiate process. According to Guiffrida (2004), "College counselors, residence hall staff, and student activities personnel should strive to facilitate involvement and social integration into the PWI [predominantly white institution] that does not alienate students from members of their home communities" (p. 705). Herndon and Hirt (2004) advocated using family weekends and commencement as a way to involve parents and for students to show appreciation for the support and encouragement they have received from them.

Tinto (2006-2007) recommended closing the gap between research and practice. As he noted, policymakers and administrators can have an understanding of why students persist and depart. Unless those individuals are able to translate research into policies that positively affect student retention, the research will not matter.

Limitations

Several limitations may have affected the results of this study. First, the participants were asked to recall events that occurred 52 years ago. Many of the participants were able to remember very poignant events and most had some uncertainty about some of the details surrounding different facets of their experiences. So, the lapse in time may have resulted in some events being inadvertently left out or other events not being told fully. Another limitation of this study is it only involved seven individuals who integrated one institution of higher learning in the late 1950s. Although each individual had similar experiences, each also had different experiences and different perceptions

about some of those experiences. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of this study with the experiences of current students in higher education and with others who also integrated once all-white institutions of higher learning. In addition, one of the individuals who helped integrate the institution passed away about six months before data were collected for this study. The absence of that individual's voice could have altered the findings of this study. Each of the participants lived off campus with their parents. If they had been given an opportunity to live on campus in one of the residence halls, this could have affected their perceptions and attitudes about their experiences at Canaan State University. Finally, all of the participants had been interviewed by another researcher conducting a study a few months prior to the beginning of this study. As a result, some participants were hesitant about participating in this study. To accommodate those individuals who were reticent about participating in this study, I altered the number of interviews conducted with those persons and the number of questions asked. This modification in the interview protocol could have impacted some of the findings of this study.

Directions for Future Research

> The fact is that despite our many years of work on this issue [student retention], there is still much we do not know and have yet to explore. More importantly, there is much that we have not yet done to translate our research and theory into effective practice. (Tinto, 2006-2007, p. 2)

This study exposed several areas that need additional research. Parental involvement was a factor that affected the participants' decision to attend the institution and impacted some of the participants' ability to persist. Taub (2008) reported today's college students

have a close relationship with their parents. Therefore, research should be conducted to determine the effects of parental involvement on the growth and development of students and how such involvement impacts student persistence. In addition, self-motivation was a factor identified by one of the participants for persisting. Research should be conducted that examines self-motivation and the role it plays in student persistence and attrition. "It is one thing to understand why students leave; it is another to know what institutions can do to help students stay and succeed" (Tinto, 2006-2007, p. 6). Therefore, another area for future research is to begin to collect qualitative data from students who are graduating or have graduated and to develop practical solutions to retain students. Institutions must begin to assess the campus climate on a regular basis to determine whether or not students of color and other underrepresented populations (gays, lesbian, physically challenged, etc.) are involved and connected to the campus.

Finally, this study should serve as additional evidence of the need for higher education administrators and policy makers to have a fuller understanding of the factors which contribute to African Americans and other students of color being successful and persisting to graduation. It is not enough to make college accessible to students of color. Institutions must create an environment through policies and programs which ensure students of color are fully integrated into the campus community. By examining the perceptions of those students who integrated predominantly white colleges and universities, policymakers and administrators can explore and better understand those factors which contribute to the success of students of color and those which result in departure from the institution. Research should also be conducted with women, Hispanics, and other racial minorities who were the pioneers who blazed the trail for

others to follow. Not only is it important to have a historical understanding of the experiences of these individuals, but it is imperative that the information gathered be used to create programs and policies to build bridges that lead to graduation. For we know that once those individuals graduate from college, the opportunities for success that are available will impact the future of this nation for generations to come.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

"Building the Bridges to Opportunity: Understanding the Persistence of African American Students who Integrated a Southern Urban University."

Principal Investigator: You are being asked by the principal investigator- James C. Cox- to answer questions about your experiences attending the University of Memphis.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to ascertain what factors contributed to the graduation of African American students who integrated a southern urban institution.

Duration: Interviews for this study will be conducted from June 7, 2011 until August 22, 2011.

Procedures: You will be contacted via phone and explained the purpose of the study and you rights as participants. You will be interviewed at least once. In addition, over the 50 years, there have been numerous articles published in newspapers and interviews conducted by various media sources that will be utilized to analyze your responses and/or validate your experiences.

Benefits: The information collected from this study will be used to understand the experiences of African -American students who integrated a southern urban university during the 1950s.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks with this study. All recordings and transcripts will be kept in a secure location and destroyed upon publication of the article (s) based on the analyses.

Confidentiality: The principal investigator will make a concerted effort not to provide identifiable information about the subject.

Contact: If you have any questions about this research project, please contact James C. Cox via phone (901- 258-5262) or email (jcox4@memphis.edu).

Voluntary Participation: At any time during the course of this study you are uncomfortable about your participation in this study, you can request that your interview(s) not be included in the study. If this occurs, your interview(s) will be excluded from the analysis.

Discontinued Participation: The participant may request that his/her interview (s) be excluded from the study at any time.

Costs: There are no costs associated with this study for the participants.

Findings: The findings from this study will be reported in the dissertation and may be used in future publications.

Signature of Participant

Date

Check any that apply:

_____Willing to participate

_____Not willing to participate

Appendix B

James C. Cox
16 Valencia Court
Jackson, MS 39204
(901) 258-5262
jcox4@memphis.edu

Dear Participant,

To begin, I want to thank you again for agreeing to participate in my dissertation study. After having an opportunity to learn the story of the Canaan State Eight, I want you to know I have come to admire and deeply respect each of you. Your courageous act of integrating a once all-white institution of higher education was an act of bravery that helped blazed the trail for myself and others to follow. Your unselfish desire to make a difference in the lives of others at the expense of being treated unjustly is laudable. I am forever indebted to each of you for taking time out of your schedule to assist me and for being very supportive and encouraging. Words cannot express my profound appreciation and gratitude I have for each of you.

I have enclosed an executive summary of my findings and part of chapter 4 of my dissertation. Please review the findings and confirm, refute, and/or provide feedback about whether or not I have accurately and completely captured the experiences of the Canaan State Eight. It should be noted the findings are based on the experiences of all seven individuals who participated in this study. Therefore, there may be some aspects of the findings that are not applicable to you or your experiences. In accordance with the university's institutional review board policy, the name Canaan State University was used to conceal the name of the institution and to protect the identities of each of the participants of this study. I will contact you via phone in about one week to discuss your feedback.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via phone (901-258-5262).

Sincerely,

James C. Cox